



Thames Valley
District School Board

EQUITY

Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy



“Dismantling anti-Black racism in our schools requires us to ensure that Black voices, histories, and experiences are shared and valued. There is also the need to acknowledge the profound impact racism has on the health and well-being of Black students and educators. When we miss opportunities to address systemic biases in education, we perpetuate cycles of trauma, stress, and inequity that harm Black students in terms of their mental, emotional, and physical health. Equity in the education sector is about creating and fostering spaces where Black students can thrive academically and holistically, nurturing their full potential for lifelong success and well-being.”

– Cathy Wood

*Former TVDSB Parent and current Black Health Lead,
London Health Sciences Centre*



Indigenous Acknowledgement

Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) is situated on the land now known as southern Ontario, which has been and continues to be the home of many Indigenous Nations. We offer gratitude and thanks to Indigenous Peoples who have been the stewards of this land since time immemorial and continue to care for it with wisdom and reverence.

We recognize that the history of colonization in these lands has uniquely impacted Black communities through the transatlantic slave trade and its enduring legacy. Colonization and slavery are intertwined systems of oppression that have left deep imprints on both Indigenous and Black communities.

While their histories are distinct, the shared impacts of white supremacy, systemic racism, and settler colonialism bind the struggles of Indigenous and Black peoples. Yet, both communities find paths to resilience and collective liberation through solidarity, resistance, and allyship. We honor the ongoing efforts of Indigenous and Black Elders, community leaders, activists, and scholars who work toward healing and justice for all peoples.

Together, we strive to foster solidarity and pursue justice for all marginalized communities as we collectively envision and build pathways toward a more just and equitable world.



Black Identity in Canada

Black Canadians have a long history dating back to the 1600s, including enslaved peoples in New France and loyalists who arrived following the American Revolution. However, much of Canada's Black population today is the result of 20th- and 21st-century immigration, particularly from the Africa and the Caribbean¹. These histories have contributed to the diverse and ever-changing culture and diversity of communities and Black identity in Canada. Black Canadians have contributed significantly to the nation's cultural, political, and economic fabric while also facing systemic discrimination, racism, and marginalization.

Blackness and Black identity are complex, dynamic constructs shaped by history, our social environment and context, and cultural forces that shape our sense of self. Blackness in Canada is defined by a wide range of experiences and backgrounds, reflecting a diverse diaspora that includes descendants of enslaved Africans, Caribbean immigrants, African immigrants, and other groups with distinct linguistic, cultural, and geographic origins. Blackness transcends mere physical appearance, such as skin color, hair, and other physical features, and involves a complex interplay of factors like ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and religion (intersectionality)^{2,3}. It embodies self-identification and how society ascribes identity, reflecting a constant negotiation between personal and external definitions.

Cultural Heritage: Black people in Canada draw from their ancestral roots, whether Caribbean, African, or otherwise, while embracing established Canadian culture⁴. This blending creates hybrid identities, where Black communities integrate the traditions, languages, and values of their family's heritage with their experiences in Canada. The adopted concept of multiculturalism in Canada, intended to promote inclusion and diversity, can lead to Black people feeling that it glosses over the specific systemic inequalities they face. For some, this means that they feel pressure to conform to a "sanitized" version of Blackness that fits within Canada's celebration of diversity, which can minimize the realities of racism⁵.

Intersectionality: Black people in Canada are diverse in their heritage, culture, gender, sexuality, class, religion, linguistic backgrounds, and many other aspects of their identity, and therefore no single experience defines Blackness. Intersectional identities further shape how Black people experience their Black identity as they navigate not only race but also other axes of oppression and privilege⁶. Immigration status often plays a significant role in shaping their experiences. For instance, first-generation Black immigrants may face additional challenges related to cultural adaptation, language barriers, and xenophobia⁷. Black women in Canada experience misogynoir, a combination of sexism and racism, which manifests in multiple forms, including workplace discrimination, sexual violence, and societal neglect. This intersection affects their economic opportunities, health outcomes, safety, and visibility in political and social discourse. Socioeconomic class intersects with race for Black Canadians, many of whom live in economically marginalized communities. Black people, especially women and recent immigrants, face higher levels of unemployment, underemployment, and wage gaps. For 2SLGBTQIA+ Black Canadians, there is an added layer of discrimination. They often face homophobia and transphobia within both the broader Canadian society and sometimes within their communities, creating complex layers of identity-based exclusion.

¹ Cooper, Afua. *The Hanging of Angélique: The Untold Story of Canadian Slavery and the Burning of Old Montreal*. Harper Perennial, 2007.

² James, Carl E. *Life at the Intersection: Community, Class and Schooling*. Fernwood Publishing, 2012.

³ Walcott, Rinaldo. *Black Like Who?: Writing Black Canada*. Insomniac Press, 2003.

⁴ Mensah, Joseph. *Black Canadians: History, Experiences, Social Conditions*. Fernwood Publishing, 2010.

⁵ Codjoe, Henry M. "Fighting a 'Public Enemy' of Black Academic Achievement—The Persistence of Racism and the Schooling Experiences of Black Students in Canada." *Race Ethnicity and Education*, vol. 4, no. 4, 2001, pp. 343-376.

⁶ Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review*, 1991.

⁷ Banjo, O.O. (2021). *Becoming Black: An Introduction to Immigrant Generations, Media Representations, and Audiences*. In: Banjo, O.O. (eds) *Immigrant Generations, Media Representations, and Audiences*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

Black Identity in Canada

Affirming Black Identity

The Black community in London represents 3.5% of the city's population.⁸ When considering this context, in which Black youth are seeking to find their sense of **belonging** and have their identities affirmed by those in their environment, we can understand the potential for neglect, dismissal, and even oppression they experience of their identity, whether intentionally or unintentionally by those in the majority. The experience of anti-Black racism in predominantly white spaces and places plays a significant role in shaping Black identity for many youth. Systemic racism in education, employment, and policing—along with microaggressions—has led many young Black Canadians to engage in activism, advocacy, and community-building efforts⁹. Youth-led movements like those in support of Black Lives Matter have created spaces for discussing Black identity, pride, and resistance to discrimination. Community-building becomes a pivotal way to affirm identity, share experiences, and build resilience against systemic barriers. Providing opportunities for Black youth to create community at school is an important way for TVDSB to support Black students in affirming their identities and reclaiming Blackness as a source of pride, empowerment, and resistance.

The Context of Anti-Black Racism

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 made the world stand still amidst national and international lockdowns and provided the attention needed when Mr. George Floyd was murdered by police officers in Minnesota, USA. The racial reckoning that followed through protests of solidarity that included Black communities and allies began renewed human rights, anti-racism, and equity and inclusion efforts in Canada and worldwide. Black people in Canada have been living through conditions of systemic and structural racism for decades. Still, it felt to these communities that government, social, and private entities were finally willing to stop, listen, and learn about their experiences.

Thames Valley recognizes that we have a long journey ahead in order to dismantle anti-Black racism in our district, yet we are committed nonetheless. During community engagement events, TVDSB heard from members of the community about experiences of anti-Black racism faced by students, staff, and parents/caregivers. The challenges and barriers faced by Black community members need to be addressed. TVDSB is committed to dismantling anti-Black racism and is committed to creating an inclusive and equitable learning and working environment for Black students, staff, and parents/caregivers.

⁸ Statistics Canada, 2021

⁹ Maynard, Robyn. *Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present*. Fernwood Publishing, 2017.

Ontario Ministry of Education's Commitment to Equity and Anti-Racism:

In Policy/Program Memorandum 119, The Ontario Ministry of Education outlines several expectations for school boards in Ontario related to equity. One such expectation is that all students should see themselves represented in their learning opportunities, and that factors such as race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation should not be barriers to their learning.

"Students need to feel engaged in and empowered by what they are learning, supported by teachers and staff, and welcome in their learning environment. To this end, boards and their schools will use inclusive curriculum and assessment practices and effective instructional strategies that reflect the diverse needs of all students and the learning pathways that they are taking. Schools must provide students and staff with authentic and relevant opportunities to learn about diverse histories, cultures, and perspectives. Students should be able to see themselves represented in the curriculum, programs, and culture of the school. Also, since schools have a pivotal role in developing the work force of tomorrow, students should be able to see themselves represented in the teaching, administrative, and support staff employed at the school."¹⁰

The Ministry of Education also makes it a requirement that schools boards in Ontario take steps to ensure that schools and workplaces are free of discrimination.

"Board policies on equity and inclusive education are designed to foster a positive school climate that is free from discriminatory or harassing behaviour. A positive and inclusive school climate is one where all members of the school community feel safe, included, welcomed, and accepted. The principles of equity and inclusive education support a whole-school approach to foster positive student behaviour."¹¹

¹⁰ Ontario Ministry of Education

¹¹ Ontario Ministry of Education



Glossary of Terms¹²

Anti-Black Racism

Prejudice, attitudes, beliefs, stereotyping or discrimination that is directed at people of African descent and is rooted in their unique history and experience of enslavement and colonization. Anti-Black racism is deeply embedded in Canadian institutions, policies and practices, to the point that it becomes a part of our systems.¹³

Anti-Colonial Approach

A conceptual framework and practice that disrupts the persistent centering of white/Eurocentric ways of knowing within culture and ideology as normative and supreme.

Anti-Indigenous Racism

Anti-Indigenous racism is the ongoing race-based discrimination, negative stereotyping, and injustice experienced by Indigenous Peoples within Canada. It includes ideas and practices that establish, maintain, and perpetuate power imbalances, systemic barriers, and inequitable outcomes that stem from the legacy of colonial policies and practices in Canada.

Anti-Muslim Racism/Islamophobia

A term that encapsulates the fear and hatred of Islam and the racism that is fueled by such sentiments. It is characterized by hatred, discrimination, and violence against Muslims and must be understood within the broader context of societal power and systems of oppression that perpetuate racism and marginalization.¹⁴

Anti-Oppression

An active and consistent process of change to equalize power imbalances through the elimination of individual, institutional and systemic oppression and injustice.

Anti-Racism

A process, a systematic method of analysis and a proactive course of action rooted in the recognition of the existence of racism, including systemic racism. Anti-racism actively seeks to identify, remove, prevent

and mitigate racially inequitable outcomes and power imbalances between groups and change the structures that sustain inequities.

Colonialism

The practice of domination which involves the subjugation of one people by another¹⁵. This often involves political domination, economic exploitation, and cultural imposition by the colonizing power over the colonized regions. Colonialism typically leads to the subjugation and marginalization of indigenous populations, who are stripped of autonomy and subjected to foreign rule.

Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP)

An approach to teaching that intentionally nurtures the uniqueness of each student in background, language, family structure and social and cultural identity, integrating the student's background and identity into curriculum and teaching to create effective conditions for learning.¹⁶

Cultural Humility

A lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and self-critique. Cultural humility focuses on redressing power dynamics and imbalances while developing partnerships with communities and those advocating for change. It also requires continuous reflection and critique at the institutional level with considerations to race, ethnicity, culture, language, sexual orientation, and class.¹⁷

Culture

The customs, beliefs, behaviours and/or achievements of a particular time and/or people; beyond ethnicity, race and/or faith, encompassing broad notions of similarity and difference reflected in multiple social identities.

Culturally Safe Learning Environments

An environment in which students feel comfortable about expressing their ideas, opinions and needs and about responding authentically to topics that may be culturally sensitive.

Disaggregated Data

Data is broken down into component parts or smaller units of data for statistical analysis. In the context of race-based data, this means breaking down the composite (aggregate) "racialized" category into its component parts such as Black, South Asian, East/Southeast Asian, Latino, Middle Eastern, White, etc.

Discrimination

Unfair treatment through either imposing a burden on a particular person or group, or denying them a privilege, benefit or opportunity enjoyed by others, because of their race, citizenship, family status, disability, sex or other personal characteristics.

Equality

Where everyone is treated the same, without considering the diversity of needs.

Equity

A condition or state of fair, inclusive and respectful treatment of all people. A distinct process of recognizing differences within groups. Equity is different from equality and underscores the idea that fairness is different than sameness.

Human Rights

The fundamental, universal rights that all citizens of the world have agreed we are all entitled to. Human rights are intrinsic, meaning we are born with them, and they are the same for every person. They are captured by the 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which define in all aspects a life of equality, dignity, and respect and a life free from discrimination. Countries have human rights laws to make sure that people and governments are held accountable if rights are not respected. In Canada, human rights are protected by provincial, territorial, federal and international laws.

Intersectionality

A critical concept that recognizes the interconnected nature of various social identities and the complex ways in which they intersect to shape an individual's lived experience. Coined by the legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, this pivotal framework acknowledges that people can be affected by multiple dimensions of identity simultaneously, highlighting that oppression and marginalization are not isolated occurrences. It recognizes that any single aspect of their identity does not solely determine an individual's experience but is influenced by the intersections of those identities.

Marginalized

Describes groups that become confined to the fringes of society through a structural process of systemic discrimination ("marginalization") that creates a class of disadvantaged minorities. The marginalized status of groups is perpetuated through various dimensions of exclusion, particularly in the labour market, from full and meaningful participation in society.

Misogynoir and Misogyny

Misogyny is hatred, disrespect, or prejudice against women or girls. It manifests in various ways, including social discrimination, violence, objectification, exclusion, and devaluation of women based on their gender. Misogynoir is a term coined by Black feminist scholar Moya Bailey in 2010.¹⁸ It refers to the specific form of misogyny that Black women experience, which is a combination of racism and misogyny. This term highlights how the intersections of race and gender uniquely affect Black women in ways that differ from and the experiences of non-Black women or Black men, in often more detrimentally oppressive ways.¹⁹

Oppression

The use of power to disempower, marginalize, silence or otherwise subordinate one social group or category often further empowering and/or privileging the oppressor.

Racialized

The process through which groups come to be socially constructed as races, based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, language, economics, religion, culture, politics, etc.²⁰

Restorative Practices

A set of strategies rooted in restorative justice that emphasize repairing the harm done to people and relationships through negative behavior or conduct, rather than punishment of the perpetrator(s). Use of restorative practices in classrooms and schools supports social-emotional learning by all parties, student mental health, belonging and inclusion and therefore helps to build supportive learning environments for all students.

Student Associations

Groups or networks of students within schools that bring together students who share a particular identity, e.g., Black Student Associations, Muslim Student Associations, Indigenous Student Associations. Association activities are student-led, with the support of a dedicated staff member.

Systemic Racism

The existence of institutions or systems that create or maintain racial inequity, often as a result of hidden institutional biases in policies, practices and procedures that privilege some groups and disadvantage others.

Trauma-Sensitive Practice/Approach

Sometimes referred to as Trauma-Informed Practice, an approach to creating welcoming, caring, respectful and safe schools that acknowledges the impact of prolonged stress created by neglect, abuse and other forms of trauma on students' well-being and their availability and capacity for learning. The approach focuses on creating learning environments that are calm, predictable and supportive, including through educator strategies that show empathy and healthy ways to handle emotions and relating to others.

Xenophobia

Fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners, or of anything that is strange or foreign. Xenophobia and white supremacy are interconnected and reinforce one another through systems of oppression.⁹

White Supremacy

The normalization of whiteness as the default, perpetuating the idea that white people and their culture are superior to that of other races and ethnicities.

¹² If no citation is provided, the definition represents a synthesis of multiple sources, tailored for the context of this document.

¹³ Government of Canada, 2021

¹⁴ Government of Ontario, 2021

¹⁵ Kohn, Margaret and Kavita Reddy, "Colonialism", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2024 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.)

¹⁶ Ontario Ministry of Education

¹⁷ School Mental Health Ontario

¹⁸ Bailey, M., & Trudy. (2018). On misogynoir: citation, erasure, and plagiarism. *Feminist Media Studies*, 18(4), 762–768. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2018.1447395>

¹⁹ Manne, Kate, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny* (New York, 2017; online edn, Oxford Academic, 23 Nov. 2017)

²⁰ Canadian Race Relations Foundation

²¹ Canadian Race Relations Foundation

Dismantling Anti-Black Racism in Education: The Right to Inclusion

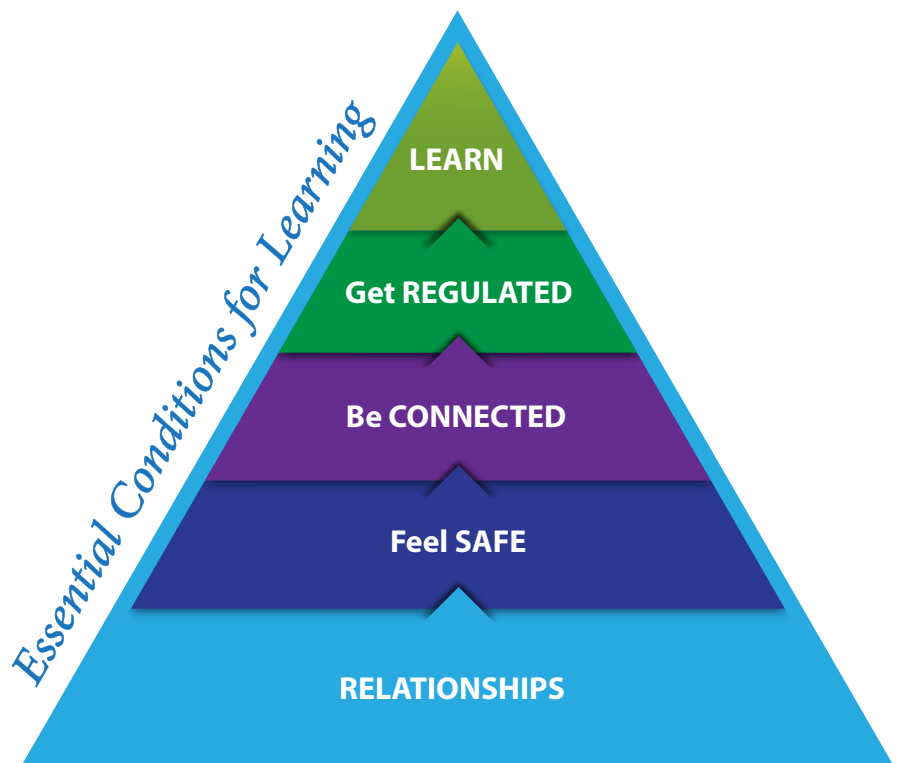
Anti-Black Racism (ABR) is prejudice and discrimination toward Black and African-descended people that is systemic and structural. It is rooted in a colonial history of enslavement, oppression, and ethnocide. The remnants of the ideologies that upheld these historical institutions are still experienced today by Black students, staff, and parents/caregivers at Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) and in the London community. TVDSB is committed to creating equitable and inclusive learning and working environments for all Black community members, including those experiencing ABR. This Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy (DABRS) is the beginning of a commitment to actioning this responsibility and ensuring the rights of Black students, staff, and parents/caregivers are protected.

The strategy is built on anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and human rights principles. The Canadian Charter of Rights section 15 is clear: “that every individual in Canada – regardless of race, religion, national or ethnic origin, colour, sex, age or physical or mental disability – is to be treated with the same respect, dignity, and consideration.” Research and voices from the Black community have revealed that systemic and structural anti-Black racism is still part of the experiences in the education systems in Canada, and Black students are not offered the same individual rights as their white and non-Black peers.

Read Policy/Program Memorandum
119 (PPM 119) from the Ontario
Ministry of Education.



Learn more about the
Ontario Human Rights Code.



The inequities they experience can be situated within the Essential Conditions for Learning framework in the following way:

Relationships: Trust is fundamental to establishing relationships between educators/administrators, and Black students, staff, and parents/caregivers. Trust can only be built when there is certainty that those in positions of responsibility can provide a safe and secure environment free of harassment, discrimination, conflict, and stress. Black students' shared experiences of not being believed, not being supported, and receiving disproportionate chastisement from adults in positions of power compared to their white and non-Black peers lead to distrust and, therefore, are not able to nurture the necessary relationships with educators/administrators and their peers.

Feel Safe: Creating a safe learning environment for Black students includes physical and psychological spaces that are free of experiences of racism, and accountability structures are in place to prevent harm and trauma. When left unaddressed, these experiences can have detrimental impacts on students, especially during early development phases. Issues that go unaddressed also further create an environment where other students are empowered to continue in anti-Black racist behaviours when they go unchecked, creating a culture of systemic exclusion and inequity that is unsafe for Black students.

Be Connected: Black students need to feel connected to those in their learning environment through shared values and mutual understanding. A lack of representation leads to isolation and loneliness because students feel no one understands them or can advocate for their needs.

Get Regulated: Black students are able to self-regulate during times of conflict or stress when they are confident in the support systems and structures that protect them from harm and feel they can trust those around them. They need to feel that the structure of their environment is predictably fair and that their inclusion is prioritized.

Learn: To reach optimum learning potential, Black students need access to an environment that offers all the foundations of relationship, safety, connectedness, and regulation.

Black staff and parents/caregivers also experience racism at TVDSB through daily interactions with the students they serve and colleague educators/administrators they interact with who either do not understand their concerns or are ill-equipped or unwilling to help. They experience significant challenges and barriers navigating systems and structures that treat them as outsiders.

To develop the TVDSB ABR Strategy, documents related to ABR in education and current equity, diversity, and inclusion policies were reviewed. Additionally, feedback was received from the TVDSB Black community through community engagement events and the Black Student Leadership Conference. First drafts of the strategy were shared with leaders in the Black community (non-profit, healthcare, education, government, religious, etc.) for feedback. These opportunities informed the Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy to support and advocate for Black students, staff, and parents/caregivers at TVDSB.

Read the Anti-Racism & Cultural Safety Resource Guide.



Learn more about Culturally
Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy.



Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy

The following diagram summarizes the goals of Thames Valley District School Board's Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy (TVDSB DABR). This strategy is designed to address and combat anti-Black racism within the educational environment. The overarching and primary goal of the TVDSB DABR strategy is to cultivate a sense of authentic and sustainable belonging for Black students, staff, and parents/care-givers. This goal is not only about inclusion but also about creating an environment where every individual feels valued, respected, and supported.



Belonging is a multifaceted concept achieved through the implementation of several key secondary goals: safety, accountability, and community. These secondary goals play a critical role in fostering a sense of belonging.



Safety: Ensuring a safe environment that affirms Black identity is paramount. This involves creating spaces where Black students, staff, and parents/caregivers can express themselves without fear of discrimination, harassment, or harm. This includes being free from microaggressions, bias, and other forms of racial trauma that can negatively impact mental health and well-being.

Accountability: Ensuring accountable support structures and policies are in place is crucial for the success of this strategy. This includes establishing clear and transparent processes, monitoring/measuring progress, and ensuring that mechanisms are in place to address issues of racism and discrimination. Accountability ensures that the strategy's goals are met and sustained over time.

Community: Building a strong, inclusive community is essential. This involves promoting solidarity, understanding, and mutual respect for Black students, staff, and parents/caregivers. Efforts are made to celebrate diversity, encourage communication and collaboration, and build meaningful connections that strengthen and benefit the entire community fabric.

Each of these secondary goals is supported by specific objectives and tasks that are designed to address the unique challenges faced by Black students, staff, and parents/caregivers. These objectives and tasks are implemented through targeted programs, initiatives, and practices that aim to dismantle systemic barriers and promote equity and inclusion.

Core Goal: Belonging

Belonging is critical for the well-being and success of Black students, staff, and parents/caregivers within school boards, particularly from an anti-racism and anti-oppression perspective. Research indicates that a strong sense of belonging can significantly enhance academic achievement, mental health, and overall engagement in the school environment²². For Black students, staff, and parents/caregivers, belonging entails feeling valued, respected, and supported in a system that has historically marginalized their identities and experiences.

Belonging was a core theme of the Black community engagements and student conferences hosted by the Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) over the past few years. These engagements provided a platform for Black students, staff, and parents/caregivers to voice their experiences and concerns, highlighting the urgent need for systemic change within the educational environment and recommending how the board can address these issues and concerns. By prioritizing belonging, TVDSB aims to create a more inclusive and supportive environment that acknowledges and celebrates the diverse Black identities within the school community.

“Conversations are the seed to understanding and knowledge is the seed to change.”

*- Leroy Hibbert,
Multicultural Outreach
Program Coordinator,
LUSO Community Services*

²² Booker, 2006

Safety

Goal One:

Create an environment where Black individuals' intersectional identities, cultures, and lived / living experiences are affirmed, valued, and acknowledged. Actively dismantle systemic barriers and power imbalances that perpetuate exclusion and marginalization. Provide staff with opportunities to build knowledge and skills in anti-racist and equitable practices to remove disproportionalities and disparities in outcomes for Black students.

Objective 1

Create safe and inclusive environments for Black students by affirming their intersectional identities through anti-racism and anti-oppression student learning opportunities and resources.

Tasks:

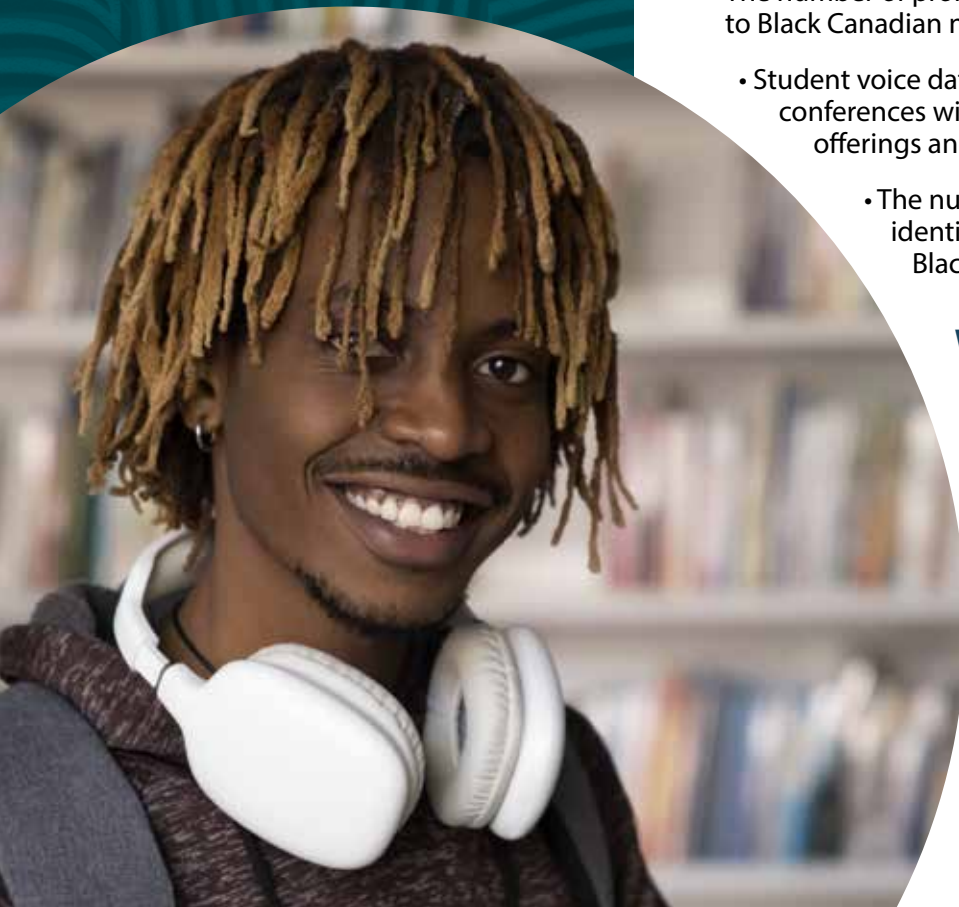
- Enhance anti-Black racism resources in classrooms and libraries that affirm Black identities and positively represent Black joy, leadership, and communities.
- Expand the number of schools offering the *Deconstructing Anti-Black Racism in the Canadian and North American Context* course.
- Integrate diverse Black Canadian narratives, histories, and contributions across the K to 12 curricula.
- Support schools in developing and executing Safe and Inclusive Schools Plans to identify specific actions related to addressing anti-Black racism.

Key Indicators:

- The number of culturally relevant learning materials in classrooms and libraries.
- The number of schools offering the *Deconstructing Anti-Black Racism in the Canadian and North American Context* course.
- The number of professional learning opportunities for staff related to Black Canadian narratives, histories, and contributions.
- Student voice data from student networks and student conferences with particular attention to feedback on course offerings and effectiveness.
- The number of *Safe & Inclusive Schools Plans* that identify specific actions related to addressing anti-Black racism.

What this will tell us:

- Further resources and course opportunities needed for schools across the district.
- Further enhancement or improvements to be made to existing resources and courses.
- Communication and access gaps of resources at schools.



Objective 2

Build staff understanding of equity, anti-oppression, and anti-racism approaches and support the implementation of practices to redress inequities and discrimination experienced by Black students, staff, and parents/caregivers.

Tasks:

- Continue to provide and increase professional learning opportunities for staff at all levels of the organization, including senior administrators, system leaders, school administrators, educators, and staff in the following areas:
 - o Equity, anti-oppression, anti-racism, culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy (CRRP), trauma-sensitive approaches, and restorative practices.
 - o The unique experiences of Black students and community members and the barriers they face due to systemic and structural racism to inform inclusive communication, care, instruction, and student assessment.
 - o Best practices in managing de-streamed Math & English courses to eliminate disparities experienced by Black students.
 - o Bias-aware progressive discipline and restorative practices to better support Black students.
- Continue to create/update resources to support the implementation of equity, anti-oppression, anti-racism, and CRRP practices from the perspective of Black students and community members.
- Enhance communication strategies and resources to share various course pathway options with parents and caregivers of Black students.

Key Indicators

- The number of professional development and learning opportunities provided and the number of attendees at sessions.
- Professional learning feedback forms.
- Student feedback forms.
- The number of communication strategies and resources shared at the school and district level.

What this will tell us

- Specific learning needed for staff.
- Changes needed to enhance learning and training offered to staff.
- Additional communication and resource support required for Black students and their parents/caregivers to make informed decisions about pathway choices.

Accountability

Goal Two:

Develop accountability mechanisms and processes that prioritize the human rights of Black students, parents, caregivers, and staff. Adopt anti-racism, anti-oppression, and equity strategies in all structures, policies, practices, and decision-making. Use data-driven and evidence-based approaches to inform strategic approaches that address and redress systemic and structural barriers for Black students, staff, and parents/caregivers.

Objective 1

Identify and understand gaps in Black student and staff outcomes

Tasks:

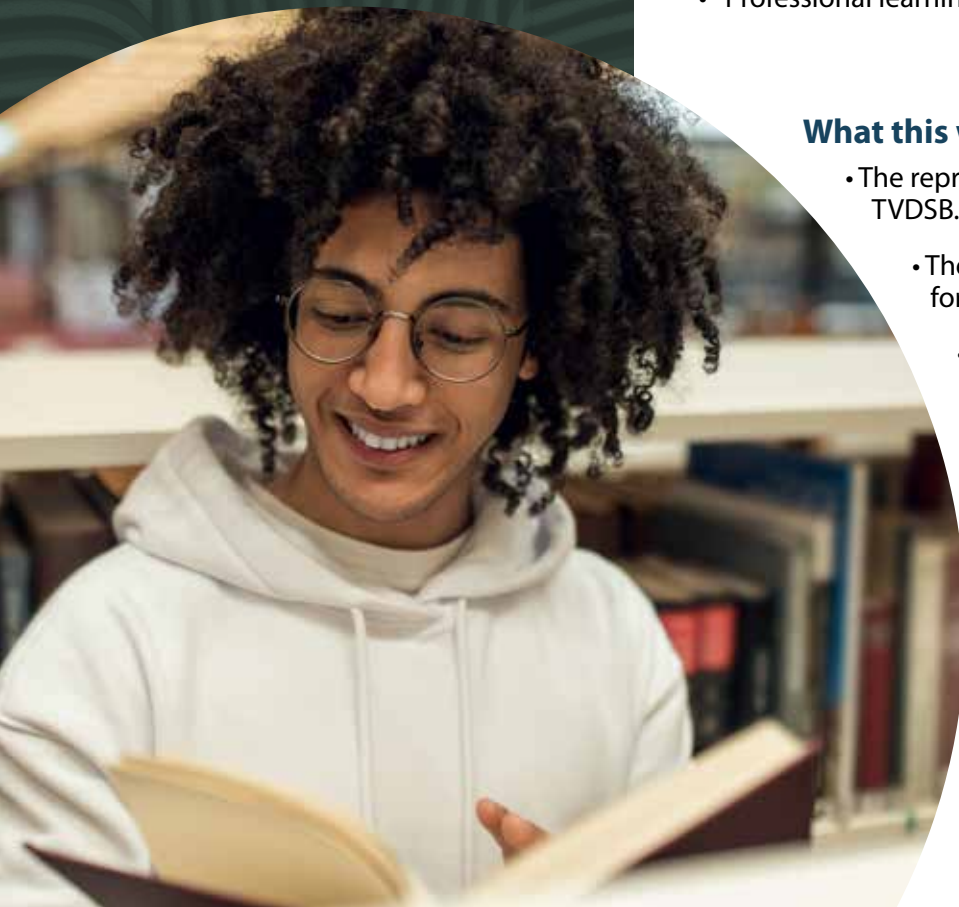
- Apply equity and anti-racism-based approaches and enhanced promotional strategies to increase participation in surveys.
- Continue administering demographic surveys to collect identity-based data about TVDSB's Black students and staff and their intersectional identities.
- Review, analyze, and report on the strengths and gaps identified in the data of self-identified Black students and staff.
- Establish benchmarks of data to be shared with system leaders to measure progress.
- Provide data literacy training for administrators, educators, and staff to understand the gaps in Black students' outcomes.

Key Indicators

- Black student and staff representation at TVDSB from the demographic survey responses.
- Number of reports that include results and recommendations from the demographic survey.
- The number of data literacy learning opportunities offered.
- Professional learning feedback forms.

What this will tell us:

- The representation of Black students and staff in TVDSB.
- The student outcome gaps in TVDSB specifically for Black students.
- Opportunities for further professional development in data literacy.



Objective 2

Create safe and supportive environments for Black students, staff, and parents/caregivers through effective policies and procedures that uphold principles of equity, human rights, anti-racism and anti-oppression.

Tasks:

- Develop an anti-racism / anti-discrimination review tool to be used by the Equity and Inclusion Policy Review Committee.
- In collaboration with the Black community, review and identify gaps and areas of need using a dismantling anti-Black racism lens.
- Create a consistent process for human rights complaints from Black students, caregivers, and staff, including collecting racial identity data. Ensure representation of experts and individuals representing the Black community are included.
- Provide system-wide direction and support for human rights concerns in schools and classrooms (e.g., prohibition of the use of racial slurs and epithets).

Key Indicators

- The number of policies and procedures reviewed and revised by the Equity and Inclusive Education (EIE) Policy Review Committee process using the anti-Black racism review tool.
- The number of engagements with the Black community to identify gaps and needs in policies and procedures.
- Feedback from the Black community about the complaints process.
- Trends in complaints and support requests from Black students, staff, and parents/caregivers regarding implementing plans, policies, practices, and guidelines.
- Professional learning feedback forms.

What this will tell us

- Additional support needed to guide the conduct and practice of educators, staff, and administrators regarding equity and human rights specific to the Black experience.
- Additional resources required to ensure that the expectations for transparent, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive conduct and practices among all TVDSB staff, employees, and community partners are clear and well understood.
- Staff capacity to respond to equity, human rights, anti-oppression, and anti-racism concerns for Black students, caregivers, and staff.
- Further learning opportunities to respond to gaps in staff and administrator knowledge and understanding related to anti-Black racism.

Objective 3

To better reflect the diversity of Black communities within all levels of the TVDSB workforce and leadership.

Tasks:

- Develop targeted recruitment strategies that encourage applications from Black community members for staff positions.
- Enhance assessment guidelines, scoring rubrics, and other documentation to support transparent decision-making in the hiring process.
- Expand bias-aware training programs to all individuals involved in the hiring process.
- Continue to actively recruit Black staff into Vice-Principal, Principal, Superintendent, and other leadership roles, and prioritize retention strategies.
- Develop a transparent equity and anti-racism leadership framework to provide equitable promotion opportunities for Black employees at all organizational levels.
- Apply equity and anti-racism-based approaches and enhanced promotional strategies to increase participation in demographic surveys.

Key Indicators

- The number of recruitment activities specifically targeted for Black community members.
- Reviews of job competitions and data analysis of representation throughout the process.
- Number of participants in bias-aware training.
- The number of Black staff participating in an equity and anti-racism leadership framework and the number of initiatives resulting from its implementation.
- The number of Black staff hired and retained from voluntary demographic survey data.

What this will tell us

- Additional strategies needed to support the recruitment, hiring, and retention of Black staff.
- Trends in the representation and retention of self-identified Black staff.
- Further opportunities to enhance the equity and anti-racism leadership framework.



Objective 1

Intentionally engage with Black staff, caregivers, and community members through relationship-building strategies rooted in anti-racism and cultural humility.

Tasks:

- Establish a Black Parent/Caregiver and Community Advisory Group to offer community voices and perspectives on developing system initiatives that support and advocate for Black students.
- Establish a Black Staff Advisory Group to offer staff voices and perspectives on developing system initiatives that support and advocate for Black students and staff.
- Collaborate with the Thames Valley Parent Involvement Committee to encourage the representation of Black parents and caregivers on school councils and other parent/caregiver engagement opportunities.
- Provide professional learning to all staff on anti-racist and equitable approaches to engaging with Black parents, families, and caregivers.

Key Indicators

- Participation, engagement, and feedback from the Black Parent/Caregiver and Community Advisory Group members.
- Participation, engagement, and feedback from the Black Staff Advisory Group members.
- The number of opportunities to engage with Thames Valley Parent Involvement Committee.
- Professional learning feedback forms

What this will tell us:

- Further opportunities for collaboration and learning with the Black Parent/Caregiver and Community Advisory Group members.
- Further opportunities for collaboration and learning with the Black Staff Advisory Group members.
- Strategies for supporting Black students, staff, and caregivers.

Community

Goal Three:

Build purposeful and collaborative relationships with Black students, staff, and parents/caregivers rooted in anti-racism and cultural humility, offering opportunities for staff to listen and learn. Provide opportunities to connect and affirm Black identities and experiences at TVDSB through affinity groups and resources that enhance belonging.

Objective 2

Collaborate with Black students to provide opportunities to connect and participate in academic, social, and leadership experiences.

Tasks:

- Establish ongoing Black Student Associations at all schools.
- Develop a Black Student Advisory Committee to consult on student-related policies, programs, and initiatives.
- Support Black Student Associations and Advisory Committee with necessary administrative support.
- Continue to offer Black student conferences and other leadership opportunities.

Key Indicators

- Number of Black Student Associations at schools.
- Black student participation in associations, conferences, and advisory committees.
- Black student voice feedback from associations, conferences, and committee participants.
- Feedback from staff advisors for associations.

What this will tell us

- Future opportunities for Black student associations, conferences, and advisory committees
 - Opportunities for increased Black student participation in associations, conferences, and advisory committees.
 - Student-informed enhancement of support and resources needed for Black students.



Objective 3

Collaborate with Black staff to provide equitable and inclusive opportunities for engagement and support.

Tasks:

- Provide ongoing support for the Black staff affinity groups and networks.
- Provide support and resources for professional development and leadership activities identified **by** Black staff **for** Black staff.

Key Indicators

- The number of meetings and activities held by affinity groups and networks.
- Black staff participation in affinity groups, professional development, and leadership activities.
- Feedback from Black staff.

What this will tell us

- Future opportunities for Black staff affinity groups, networks, professional development, and leadership activities.
- Opportunities for increased Black staff participation in affinity groups, professional development, and leadership opportunities.

“Increasing the community’s awareness of anti-Black racism and offering strategies for change will contribute to the empowerment of Black students and Board employees. Sharing information with the larger population will enhance our skills as we work together towards a more united community.”

*– Christina Lord
Community Member*



AMSA YARO STUDIO

Thames Valley District School Board is grateful to Amsa Yaro for the use of her original print, seen on this page and throughout the strategy.

Amsa Yaro is a former journalist turned Mixed Media artist who uses materials like paper to create original works inspired by her Nigerian background, culture and life.

Yaro has been a part of several events which include Simple Reflections, London, Ontario 2023-24, London's Artist Studio Tour 2024, Unity Project's UpwithArt Auction in 2021 to 2023, Black history Month Arts Pop Up Show, Musuem London, February 2022 as well as London Arts Live artist with London Art Council to mention a few.

Yaro co-curated the 2021 Black Visual Arts Exhibition at the Somerville 630 Gallery, London, Ontario as well as organized the Black History Month Arts Pop Up in Museum London, 2022.

You can also find her artwork, 'Yetunde', at the corner of William and York, as part of the London Art Council's Traffic Signal Wrap Public Art as well as a collaborative piece under OEV Mural Art Project on 632 Dundas Street, London, Ont. if you enjoy a trip down to Covent Garden Market, you can get to see the newest mural featuring some of London's historic buildings, painted by Yaro in 2023.

As an art teacher, she covers a wide variety of classes which include Plasticine Relief sculpting, Paper Mache Sculptures, Paper Collage Art, Watercolor Batik Art and more with the London Art Council as well as the London Public Library. She lives with her Husband in London, Ontario.

Website: [Amsayarostudio.com](https://amsayarostudio.com)

Social Media: @Amsayarostudio

"Learning to thrive in life is achieved when one can move within a space without worry: Worry if they belong, if they are the right look, the right age, the right room or the right space. Survival might keep one going but, to thrive is to live one's full potential where the sky is just the beginning. Where dreams can become reality and hope flourishes for those to come.

Our children deserve spaces where them thriving is the objective, not just surviving to see another day. We should, as a community of parents, family, teachers and administrators, create a space where our children can learn and thrive authentically, without worry of fitting in a box not meant for them."

— Amsa Yaro



Thames Valley
District School Board

For more information, contact us at:

Thames Valley District School Board
1250 Dundas Street
London, ON N5W 5P2

www.tvdsb.ca/Equity