



## Anti-Black Racism and Black Excellence Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024 | 6:30 p.m. | North Boardroom, 650 Rossland Rd. West, Oshawa

**Attendance:** Chair Shauna Bookal, Vice-Chair Jamaal Augustine, Director Tracy Barill, HREA Kayode Akomolafe, Superintendent Katharine Stevenson, Brenda Rocha, Mary Lewis, Angela Adu-Morrison, Megan, Christina Seucharan, Anissa Voisin, Nicole Emanuel, Yulan Fisher-Brown, Zhora Adatia-McGlashen, Lara Awoleye, Trevor Aitcheson, Mary-Atracta Okolie

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION	OWNER
<p><b>Land Acknowledgement:</b> <i>Niinwind ndi kendaamin omaa Durham region debendmowaad giw Michi Saagiig of Scugog Island iw aki omaa yaa yong.</i></p> <p><i>We here in the Durham Region respectfully acknowledge that we are on the traditional lands of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island.</i></p>	<p><b>Vice-Chair Augustine</b></p>
<p><b>Opening Prayer:</b></p>	<p><b>Vice-Chair Augustine</b></p>
<p><b>Courtesies:</b> To Chair Bookal for being recognized as one of the 100 Accomplished Black Canadian Women on <a href="http://100abcwomen.ca">100abcwomen.ca</a>. Congratulations!</p>	<p><b>Director Barill</b></p>
<p><b>Welcome Remarks &amp; Reminders:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members commended Allison Hector-Alexander's great presentation at the Equity Invitational Learning Series held at the Pope Francis Center on January 16th.</li> <li>The board will ask Allison for her approval to share the video recording of the event.</li> <li>In response to clarifying the role of the committee, it was reiterated that the ABR &amp; BE is an advisory committee and does not make decisions on behalf of the Board.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Chair Bookal</b></p>
<p><b>Committee Strategic Action Plan:</b></p> <p>The proposals previously submitted to the board by erstwhile ABR &amp; BE subcommittees were discussed with a view to developing a strategic action plan for this committee based on what proposals may have been implemented by the board and what is outstanding. It was decided that this committee should consider the short and long-term ideas presented in the subcommittees' proposals and determine what portions of it may form the committee's strategic action plan.</p> <p><i>(Please see the attached chart for the subcommittee's proposals and the stage of their implementation.)</i></p> <p>Below is a list of various initiatives that the board is implementing in alignment with the subcommittees' proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human Resources Department hiring practices reviewed to increase representation of Black individuals.</li> <li>Increased collaborating between the board and community organizations for career enlightenment programs, including Black professional role models engaging with Black students regarding choice of professional careers.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Chair Bookal</b> <b>HREA Akomolafe</b> <b>Superintendent Stevenson</b></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the beginning of March, there will be an Ubuntu program that provides mentorship for youth. Information regarding the program will be distributed throughout schools in the coming weeks.</li> <li>• Members were invited to see a culminating art wall in the hallway at the Board office.</li> <li>• Three of the board's seven high schools are currently running the Deconstructing Anti-Black Racism IDC4U course in Grade 12 which is currently geared to university level students. The Board is looking to expand the course to the remaining high schools soon. Non-university-oriented students are unable to enroll in the course because the Ministry of Education designates it as a university level course. It was noted that only one interdisciplinary course may be taken by students; additional courses cannot be applied toward credit requirements.</li> <li>• The appropriate identity of St. Monica is being recognized in the school. The school administration set up a Black Youth Committee, which is collaborating with a Black student at St. Mary Catholic School to produce an appropriate visual representation of the saint.</li> <li>• School administrators have purchased Black iconography representation for schools to promote diversity.</li> <li>• For committee members to keep track of developments at the Board, Director Barill directed them to the current Board equity webpage. The Strategic Plan 2026 delineates our objectives and areas of concentration, encompassing equity.</li> </ul> <p><b>Student Demographic Data Survey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The board conducted a student census in 2022. Of the 15,900 students who were eligible to participate in the census, only 39% completed the survey. This census covered students in grades 4-12.</li> <li>• The Board will conduct its next student demographic data survey in Spring 2024. This survey will cover grades K-12.</li> <li>• The student demographic survey will be conducted in alternate years to the school climate survey.</li> <li>• Data gathered from the survey will be used to inform the development, implementation and review of the board's policies and procedures.</li> <li>• Data from the next survey in the Spring will be compared with results of the previous student demographic survey.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b> Brenda to include the Equity Action Plan PowerPoint from March 2022 with the Minutes.</p>	
<p><b>Review of Sessions 1 and 2 of the Equity Invitational Learning Series:</b> A brief program overview of sessions 1 and 2 of the Equity Invitational Learning Series was provided. Members were requested to share their feedback from both sessions via email for discussion at the next committee meeting.</p> <p><i>The following suggestions were made:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. More time be provided for Q &amp; A. Comments and conversation are key elements of the evening.</li> <li>2. Provide a brief introduction on the role of the ABR &amp; BE Advisory Committee and reasons for organizing these events.</li> <li>3. Members to wear name tags during these events.</li> <li>4. Include student senate and trustees. Consider having them share updates on happenings in schools.</li> <li>5. Prepare an action plan to diffuse any dangerous or harmful rhetoric that may arise during events.</li> <li>6. Create a survey at the end of the school year to vote on which events members liked best and what suggestions they may have for future events.</li> </ol>	<p><b>HREA Akomolafe</b></p>
<p><b>Black History Month and Black Mental Health Day:</b></p>	<p><b>HREA Akomolafe</b></p>

<p><b>Black History Month:</b>  The long-term goal is not to just celebrate Black Excellence in February but to celebrate it all year long. Activities planned for the month include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School level instructional learning on Black history and Black excellence.</li> <li>• Drumming, dance and connecting with community partners.</li> <li>• Coach Advocates for Black Students at DOC, St. Mary C.S.S. &amp; Notre Dame C.S.S. are planning activities with their schools' administration.</li> <li>• Strategic Plan, which includes equity, is embedded in all the school activities at the Board level.</li> <li>• Black History Month kick-off event at the Board office (Pope Francis Center) starts on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 with Father Colman Mruma hosting the liturgy. The event will include Afrocentric music and feature an exhibit by the Canadian Multicultural Inventors Museum to celebrate Black Canadians who have contributed to Canadian development throughout history to present day. Over 150 Board staff members are expected to attend.</li> <li>• Black History Month closing event at the Board office (Pope Francis Center) will be held on February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024 featuring Chinyere Eni-McLean as keynote speaker. There will be music and food from local Black businesses.</li> </ul> <p>Members suggested that in addition to the above, the Board could:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highlight on the DCDSB website all Black administrators and instructors at our Board who the public may not be aware of.</li> <li>• Spotlight the Parent Area Representatives.</li> <li>• Promote Black authors and their books.</li> </ul> <p><b>Black Mental Health Day:</b></p> <p><b>Be You, Be Well: A Black Mental Health Day Event</b> <a href="https://www.dcdsb.ca/en/parents/black-mental-health-day.aspx">https://www.dcdsb.ca/en/parents/black-mental-health-day.aspx</a>:</p> <p>Senior Manager, MHI, Yulan Fisher-Brown, provided members with details of the 'Be You, Be Well: A Black Mental Health Day Event' being held by the Board in conjunction with community partners at Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School at 6:30 p.m. on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The goal is to highlight the ongoing impact of the experiences of anti-Black racism on mental health of Black individuals and to raise awareness of the specific mental health needs of Black communities.</li> <li>• This event is open to students, families, staff, and community members. Roxanne Francis, a psychotherapist, is the keynote speaker. Food will be available at the event.</li> <li>• The planning committee is introducing a panel into this year's event due to the impact of the Q &amp; A session last year. The panel consists of Joy Lapps (artist and composer), Trudy Stone (nutritionist), Karrienne Edwards (psychotherapist).</li> <li>• Jack.org will provide a youth experience.</li> <li>• There will be performances celebrating Black Excellence.</li> <li>• The event will be recorded for those who may not be available to attend in person.</li> </ul> <p><i>The following suggestions were shared:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue hard copies flyers to local communities.</li> <li>• To keep children entertained during the event, provide activities for them. Reach out to Durham College ECE students for course hours. Promote the event as a "family friendly" gathering with panel speakers.</li> <li>• To ensure that all students have access to the event and its contents, use the event recording in the classroom when it is made available.</li> <li>• Add this event as part of the announcements during mass on Sunday at parishes.</li> <li>• Have this event promoted during morning announcements in schools.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Yulan Fisher-Brown</b>  <b>Lara Awoleye</b></p>
<p><b>African Ancestral/Land Acknowledgment:</b></p>	<p><b>Anissa Voisin</b></p>

<p>Members discussed the use of an African Land Acknowledgement at the committee's meetings and events organized by it. The two versions below are to be reviewed at the committee's next meeting.</p> <p><b>1. Used by the Afrocentric Circle of Support Group:</b></p> <p><i>"We continue to observe a moment to honor those who resisted and were left at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean; those who resisted on the plantation and fought for our freedom from the shackles of enslavement; and those who fought to emancipate from the shackles of colonial rule and gain our countries' independence. We honor those who have led lives of service and stood up for social, political, and economic justice, and those who have confronted and dismantled oppressive practices, challenged institutions, and have built affirming and equitable examples to inspire us all. It was you all, our ancestors, who have sacrificed so that we may be here. You, our ancestors, stood up against dehumanization, economic exploitation, gender discrimination and violence, religious bigotry, and other oppressive forces. It was you, our ancestors, who fearlessly confronted and denounced one of the worst forms of oppression the world has ever known: anti-Black/African racism. We consciously stand on your sturdy and courageous shoulders and for that, and we thank you."</i></p> <p><b>2. Used by the City of Toronto:</b></p> <p><i>"The City of Toronto acknowledges all Treaty peoples – including those who came here as settlers – as migrants either in this generation or in generations past – and those of us who came here involuntarily, particularly those brought to these lands as a result of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery. We pay tribute to those ancestors of African origin and descent".</i></p> <p><b>Action:</b> The committee will vote on whether to implement the use of African Ancestral/Land Acknowledgement at its meetings and events.</p>	
<p><b>Hiring of Additional Coach Advocate for Black Students Update:</b></p> <p>Members were informed that the Board received more funding that enabled it to hire Mr. Michael Mayer as the board's third Coach Advocate for Black Students.</p> <p>Members suggested that the board should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>highlight the three Coach Advocates for Black Students on the DCDSB website, so families become aware of their roles.</li> <li>invite the Coach Advocates for Black Students to attend one of the committee meetings for information sharing.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b> Chair Bookal to provide Director Barill with details pertaining to possible grant funding through Foundation for Black Communities which closes in February 2024.</p>	<p><b>Director Barill</b></p>
<p><b>Closing Prayer</b></p>	<p><b>Vice Chair Augustine</b></p>
<p><b>Adjournment</b></p>	<p><b>Chair Bookal</b></p>