

# **Info Session**

## **Equity & Inclusion at the TDSB**

**Presented to Dundas Parent Council  
Speaker Series**

**Thursday, March 22, 2018**



## Equity & Inclusion at TDSB



- Despite many TDSB efforts over decades, racism, bias, discrimination and other societal issues continue to affect the achievement of selected groups of TDSB students.
- The TDSB has recently re-committed to efforts to ensure these groups can achieve success to the same levels as other students.
- The TDSB's Enhancing Equity Task Force created a Report and submitted it to the Director.
- The TDSB Director, staff and Trustees are now working to implement many aspects of the report.
- More detail is here:

<http://www.tdsb.on.ca/About-Us/Equity/Related-Reports/Directors-Response-to-the-Enhancing-Equity-Task-Force>



- **One of the aspects of the report is to increase professional learning for staff in equity, anti-oppression, anti-racism and human rights.**
- **An excerpt of the report reads:**

“We are committed to providing all staff with professional learning in:

  - Equity, anti-oppression, anti-racism, and human rights, alongside our federation and union partners;
  - Indigenous education, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Calls to Action, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.”
- **What is Equity at the TDSB?:** “It’s providing each and every student with the conditions that support achievement and well-being. It is about supporting not only the students who are falling behind, but raising the bar for all students.”
- **What is anti-oppression?:** “Involves trying new classroom models and teaching techniques that will not use power of the teacher (authority figure) to disempower, marginalize, silence or otherwise subordinate students as a whole or certain types of students in the class.”



### **Professional Learning for Staff – Next Steps**

- The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) has the Equitable and Inclusive Schools team.
- This team works with Principals, Vice-Principals, teachers and staff across the Board to ensure that fairness, equity, and inclusion are essential principles in our schools, and are integrated into all policies, programs, operations, and practices.
- Many staff across the TDSB have participated in exercises intended to make them aware of their own perspectives and biases; awareness that everyone has inherent bias is a first step to eliminating discrimination

## Equity & Inclusion at TDSB



- One exercise is known as “The Privilege Walk”: Participants listen to a series of questions and after each they are asked to take a step forward or backwards based on their responses.
  - This activity forces participants to confront the ways in which society privileges some individuals over others. It is designed to get participants to reflect on the different areas in their lives where they have privilege as well as the areas where they don't.

Here is a sampling of the questions that are used:

If you were ever called names because of your race, class, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, take one step back.

If there were people who worked for your family as servants, gardeners, nannies, etc. take one step forward.

If you were ever ashamed or embarrassed of your clothes, house, car, etc. take one step back.

If one or both of your parents were "white collar" professionals: doctors, lawyers, etc. take one step forward.

If you were raised in an area where there was prostitution, drug activity, etc., take one step back.

If you ever tried to change your appearance, mannerisms, or behavior to avoid being judged or ridiculed, take one step back.

If you were taken to art galleries or plays by your parents, take one step forward.

If one of your parents was unemployed or laid off, not by choice, take one step back.

If you attended private school or summer camp, take one step forward.

If your family ever had to move because they could not afford the rent, take one step back.

If you were ever discouraged from academics or jobs because of race, class, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, take one step back.

If you were encouraged to attend college by your parents, take one step forward.

If you have a disability take one step backward.

If you were raised in a single parent household, take one step back.

If your family owned the house where you grew up, take one step forward.

[ Attendees at session participated in this activity. ]



## Debrief & Questions