WINTER 2021 VOL. 23 NO. 2



# The Upcycled School

Reshaping education with passports and passion projects

► ACTION TO AWARENESS ► 2020 OPC CENSUS ► CLEANING YOUR EQUITY LENS





## Learn. Lead. Inspire.

LATE SPRING 2021 ♦

#### **Online Course Offerings** SPRING 2021 •

ADDITIONAL BASIC QUALIFICATIONS	
Primary	• • ▲
Junior	• • ▲
ABQ INTERMEDIATE	
Business Studies	• • •
English	• • ▲
Family Studies	• • ▲
First Nations, Métis and Inuit Studies	• • •
French as a Second Language	• • •
Geography	• • •
Health & Physical Education	• • •
History	• • •
Mathematics	• • ▲

#### **ABQ SENIOR**

Science - General

٠	٠	
	٠	
٠	٠	
٠		
٠	٠	
٠		
٠	٠	
٠	٠	
٠	٠	
٠	٠	
•	•	
	• • • • • • • • •	

#### HONOUR SPECIALIST

Biology	• • •
Business Studies	• • •
Chemistry	• • ▲
Dramatic Arts	• • 🔺
English	• • ▲
French as a Second Language	• • 🔺
Geography	• • •
Health & Physical Education	• • 🔺
History	• • ▲
Mathematics	• • ▲
Music	• • 🔺
Physics	• • 🔺
Science - General	• • ▲
Social Sciences	• • ▲
Technological Education	• • 🔺
Visual Arts	• • 🔺

THREE-PART ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATION	S		
Cooperative Education Part 1	•	٠	
Cooperative Education Part 2	•		
Cooperative Education Specialist	•	•	
Environmental Education Part 1 NEW	•	٠	
Environmental Education Part 2 NEW	•	•	
Environmental Education Specialist NEW	•		
First Nations, Métis & Inuit Peoples Part 1	•	٠	
First Nations, Métis & Inuit Peoples Part 2	•		
First Nations, Métis & Inuit Peoples Specialist	•	٠	
French as a Second Language Part 1	•	٠	
French as a Second Language Part 2	•	٠	
French as a Second Language Specialist	•		
Guidance & Career Ed Part 1	•	٠	
Guidance & Career Ed Part 2	٠	٠	
Guidance & Career Ed Specialist	•	٠	
Health & Physical Ed (P/J) Part 1	•	٠	
Health & Physical Ed (P/J) Part 2	•	٠	
Health & Physical Ed (P/J) Specialist			
Inclusive Classrooms Part 1 NEW	•	•	
Inclusive Classrooms Part 2 NEW	•		
Inclusive Classrooms Specialist NEW	•	٠	-
Integration of Information & Computer Technology in Instruction Part 1	•	•	
Integration of Information & Computer Technology in Instruction Part 2	٠	٠	
Integration of Information & Computer Technology in Instruction Specialist	•		
Kindergarten Part 1	•	٠	
Kindergarten Part 2	٠		
Kindergarten Specialist	٠	٠	
Mathematics, Primary & Junior Part 1	٠	٠	
Mathematics, Primary & Junior Part 2	•	٠	
Mathematics, Primary & Junior Specialist	٠	٠	
Reading Part 1	•	٠	
Reading Part 2	٠	٠	
Reading Specialist	٠	٠	
Religious Education in Catholic Schools Part 1	٠	٠	
Religious Education in Catholic Schools Part 2	٠	•	
Religious Education in Catholic Schools Specialist	•		
Special Education Part 1	•	٠	
Special Education Part 2	٠	٠	
Special Education Specialist	٠	٠	
Teacher Leadership Part 1	٠	٠	
Teacher Leadership Part 2	٠	٠	
Teacher Leadership Specialist			

SUMMER 2021 🔺

#### OPEN ENROLMENT

Teacher Librarian Part 1	•	٠	
eacher Librarian Part 2	٠		
Feacher Librarian Specialist	٠	٠	
eaching English Language Learners Part 1	٠	٠	
Feaching English Language Learners Part 2	•	٠	
Teaching English Language Learners Specialist	٠		

#### **ONE-SESSION QUALIFICATIONS**

· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
Adult Education	• • 🔺
Classroom Management	• • ▲
Orientation To Teaching In Ontario	• • 🔺
Outdoor Experiential Education NEW	• • ▲
Safe & Accepting Schools	• • ▲
Teaching Students with Behavioural Needs	• • ▲
Teaching Students with Communication Needs (Autism)	• • ▲
Teaching Students with Communication Needs (Learning Disability)	• • ▲
Student Assessment & Evaluation	• • •
Teaching & Learning Through e-Learning	• • ▲
Teaching Combined Grades	• • ▲
Teaching First Nations, Métis and Inuit Children	• • ▲
Teaching LGBTQ Students	• • 🔺
Teaching Students with Intellectual Needs (Mild Intellectual Disability)	• • ▲
Use and Knowledge of Assistive Technology	• • ▲

#### **TECHNOLOGICAL EDUCATION**

Communications Tech Grades 9/10	•	٠	
Communications Tech Grades 11/12			
Computer Tech Grades 9/10	•	•	
Green Industries Grades 9/10			
Tech Design Grades 9/10	•	٠	
Tech Design Grades 11/12			

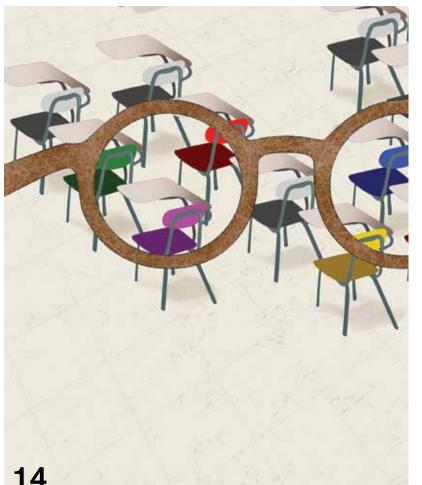
#### EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT STAFF

Communicating Effectively with Parents	
Creating Inclusive Work Environments	

	SESSION DATES	REGISTRATION DEADLINE
SRPING	Apr 12 – Jun 11, 2021	Apr 02, 2021
LATE SPRING	May 10 – Jul 02, 2021	Apr 30, 2021
SUMMER	Jun 28 – Aug 13, 2021	Jun 18, 2021

\$685 - ABQ Primary, ABQ Junior, One-Session AQ, Three-Session AQ (excluding FSL Part 1) \$745 - ABQ Intermediate, ABQ Senior, ABQ Technological Ed, Honour Specialist, FSL Part 1 \$75 - Educational Support Staff

# ontents THE REGISTER: WINTER 2021, VOLUME 23, NUMBER 2



14

# **From Awareness** to Action

Disrupting racism/anti-Black racism as education leaders



# Features

- 06 2020 OPC Census By The OPC
- 08 Cleaning Your Equity Lens By Peggy Sweeney
- 14 From Awareness to Action By Dr. Andrew Campbell
- 22 The Upcycled School By Nicole Miller
- 28 Finding Strategies to Deal with Stress By Ida Brass
- **34 A Focus on Fairness** By Protective Services Team

# Columns

- 04 President's Message
- 13 Professional Learning
- 42 Lived Experiences



- 40 Mark Your Calendar
- 41 Review

# Successful Advocacy on Regulation 274

Ensuring we can hire the best teacher for our students



# On October 14, 2020, the <u>Ontario government</u> announced it would be revoking the controversial practice of hiring teachers based on seniority.

Education Minister Stephen Lecce said the government wanted to focus on hiring practices based on merit, rather than solely on seniority. It was a positive change for students, parents and our school communities, and one we were instrumental in bringing about.

When we advocate for change that is in the best interest of students, we are working to improve our system and support the values of our community. Over the past eight years, the OPC has been advocating for the revocation of Regulation 274, which was enacted in 2012 at the cost of ensuring that the best teacher would be at the front of the class. Claims were made, though not validated, that hiring practices had been based on nepotism and favouritism. The government's agreement to this regulation, in order to reach an agreement with OECTA, impacted other teacher unions and tied the hands of principals and vice-principals. It was supposedly intended to support fair hiring practices, but instead curtailed them.

We immediately began identifying the pitfalls of the Regulation. Hiring is one of the most important roles we fulfill and ensuring that the right teacher is in the classroom promotes student achievement, arguably more than any other action of ours. We support hiring policies and procedures that focus on merit, diversity and equity. When working in an environment that focuses on people and their nuanced needs, we must acknowledge that one-dimensional practices will not produce optimal results.

Regulation 274 created many barriers. It limited the ability of teachers to move from one board to another, discouraged teachers from changing panels, prevented administrators from returning to the classroom and slowed the hiring process. It made it difficult to be responsive in a timely manner, often resulting in students having multiple short-term teachers.

Although it can be disheartening to a teacher to be passed over for positions, we must recognize that this happens for specific reasons. In addition to changing our hiring practices, support processes for struggling occasional teachers also need to be put in place and utilized. Mentoring new teachers is difficult when they have multiple short-term opportunities. Inclusion in structured centralized teacher induction programs and mandatory participation in professional development activities can be introduced to support teachers in developing their skills and thus increasing their opportunities to gain permanent employment. As principals and viceprincipals, we are committed to our teachers, and recognize our responsibility to support mentoring and improvement. Our efforts ultimately positively impact students.



Ontario Principals' Council 20 Queen Street West, 27th Floor Toronto, Ontario M5H 3R3 Tel: 416-322-6600 or 1-800-701-2362 Fax: 416-322-6618 Website: www.principals.ca Email: admin@principals.ca

The Register is published digitally three times a year by the Ontario Principals' Council (OPC). The views expressed in articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the OPC. Reproduction of any part of this publication must be authorized by the editor and credited to the OPC and the authors involved. Letters to the editor and submissions on topics of interest to the profession are welcome. Although paid advertisements appear in this publication, the OPC does not endorse any products, services, or companies, nor any of the claims made or opinions expressed in the advertisement.

> Peggy Sweeney, editor Laura Romanese, assistant editor Linda Massey, editorial consultant Dawn Martin, proofreader Allyson Otten, business manager

> > Art Direction and Design: Fresh Art & Design Inc.

Advertising: Dovetail Communications Inc. 905-886-6640

The Register is the proud recipient of the following awards:







Eight years is a long time to work for change. Commitment to our students does not have a time limit. We will always support causes that improve our education system through direct advocacy with the Minister of Education, the ministry and government in general. We strive to support the public in understanding that as familiar as they are with their child's teacher and schools in general, it is the principal who leads the school. It is the principal and viceprincipal who know their school communities and work tirelessly to support what is done in the classroom.

We know that schools have unique needs and a "one size fits all" process will not benefit students. We are committed to transparent hiring practices that are fair and equitable, recognizing that this is how barriers to employment will be broken down and opportunities for students to see themselves reflected in their teachers will be fostered. ▲

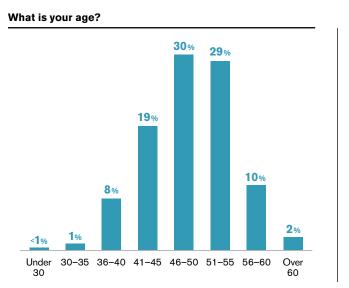
> Read more on the changes to Regulation 274 in our Legal Feature, "A Focus on Fairness," on page 34.



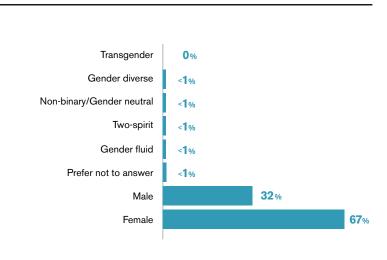
president@principals.ca@PresidentOPC

# 2020 OPC CENSUS

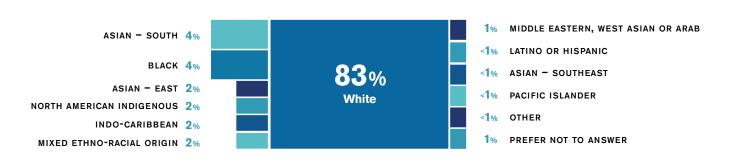
In the fall of 2020, we conducted the first OPC Census. 2,855 Members completed it, or 52 per cent of our membership, a much higher return rate than we have ever received on previous surveys or polls. Below are some of the highlights from the Census, for your review and information. The entire report, data and comments are currently being reviewed by our Executive, Senior Staff and the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee, in partnership with an external consultant who specializes in equity survey data. Over the next several months, we'll be releasing more information about the data, our analysis and next steps.



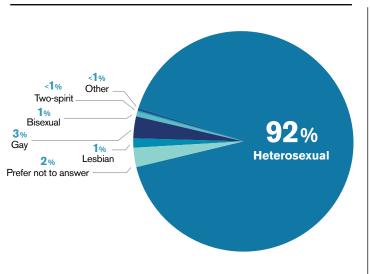
#### What is your gender identity?



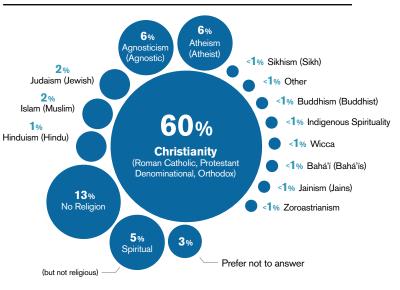
#### Which of the following best describes your ethno-racial identity, regardless of your place of birth?

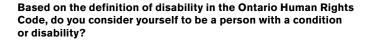


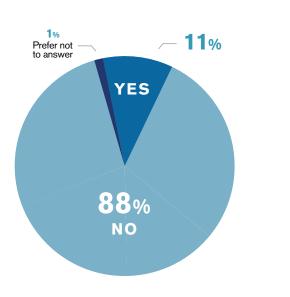




#### What religion do you most align yourself with?



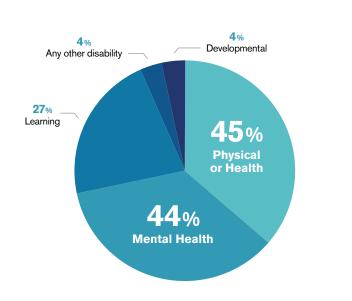




Have you experienced discrimination and/or harassment in the past five years as a principal or vice-principal based on any of the human rights protected grounds?

	_
Immigration status	<1%
Other (human rights protected)	2%
Disability	5%
Sexual orientation	6%
Creed (religion)	8%
Marital/family status	14%
Gender identity/gender expression	19%
Sex (including pregnancy)	25%
Age	25%
Race, colour, ancestry, ethnic origin or place of origin	28%
Personal discrimination or harassment	<b>42</b> %

#### If you indicated you have a disability, which type of disability do you have?



If you have experienced discrimination or harassment due to one of the human rights protected grounds, what was the source of the discrimination/harassment?

Education association/federation		3%	6
Trustee(s) in your board			<b>5</b> %
Other		1	0%
Staff from another school in your boar	ď	1	1%
Community member(s)		1	3%
Student(s)		18	8%
Staff in your school		3	8%
Senior administration in your board		3	8%
Parents		58	8%

# CLEANING YOUR

# EQUITY LENS

How self-reflection helps lead to the dismantling of bias

By Peggy Sweeney

Photography by Stef + Ethan Tana Turner has been involved with diversity and equity issues for over 30 years. She began her career with the Ontario Women's Directorate, conducting gender equity analyses and supporting voluntary employment equity efforts that were instrumental in opening up leadership positions for women in school boards, college, universities, hospitals and municipalities. She was also responsible for the first analysis of the diversity of the population of the city of Toronto, highlighting the changes in the ethnic, racial and linguistic composition. The resulting reports guided the development of policies and programs that were responsive to the city's changing demographics. She also worked on developing provincial employment equity legislation.



Now a private consultant, Tana has been involved in dozens of Employment System Reviews (Equity Audits), reviewing human resources documents, policies and programs through an equity lens to ensure compliance with employment and equity-related legislation. She has delivered training on human rights, anti-racism/anti-oppression and unconscious bias in the hiring process to school boards, and is currently working with a board to develop a strategy to dismantle anti-Black racism.

Tana has seen a lot in 30 years.

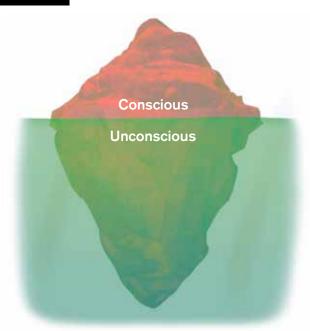
"Looking back, I would have thought that we would have been a little further along in the conversation by now," she admits. "I'd like to work my way out of a job. I hope there won't be a need for equity consultants 30 years from now."

Instead, she would like to see organizations doing the work themselves, embedding it into everything they do. "I'd like to see staff – no matter if they're school administrators, educators or in finance, human resources or IT – have the skills and knowledge to apply an equity lens to their own work."

While many things have changed in the equity field over 30 years, two events are particularly notable for her. "In 2016, when Donald Trump was elected, I think there was an increase in this work in Canada, or at least in my part of the world, southern Ontario. Because of the racism that came along with the Trump election, Canadians did some selfreflection and wanted to show that they were not like the Americans.

"And then after the killing of George Floyd, there was an admission that systemic racism exists. Before his killing, the term 'systemic racism' wasn't commonly used. The American election and Floyd's killing heightened our awareness and the public discussion. People have been

#### Figure 1



protesting police killings for decades in Canada. But I think what happened in the U.S. actually forced organizations in Canada to do a lot more self-reflection and actually admit that there are issues here. And they're Canadian-born issues that have nothing to do with the U.S.

"We have a myth in Canada that we like to cling to that we're the bastion of human rights, that we export human rights and we talk about human rights to other countries, that we're better than the U.S. because enslaved Africans came to Canada through the underground railroad to freedom. But we never reflect on what really happened for them here, the racism they were met with, the outcomes for Black, racialized and Indigenous people in this country. We like to cling to this myth that we're this fantastic country with no issues. But I think now more people have come to the point of admitting that while we are certainly better than the U.S., we still have a lot of work to do."

What is that work? What needs to be done?

A lot of Tana's work is around identifying the systemic barriers within organizations and helping organization to address them. "Unconscious bias has become part of the conversation because we need to look at how systems, policies and practices are impacted by the biases that individuals bring to the table. The definition of unconscious bias that I use comes from the Kirwan Institute, which defines it as the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions and decisions in an unconscious manner.

Why is understanding unconscious bias such an important part of the equity conversation? "People tend to externalize this work and focus on the systemic aspects of policies and practices and don't necessarily reflect on what they bring to the table, and the biases that they have," explains Tana. "It helps connect individual attitudes, perceptions and stereotypes that we hold with ideologies that impact how we think about and view particular groups of people. We don't come to these attitudes randomly. They are informed by the larger systems and structures within society, and our behaviours and decisions can impact these systems and structures."

We've likely all seen a similar picture of the iceberg depicted in Figure 1. In this version, it shows our unconscious below the surface and our conscious minds above the water line. Tana uses this slide in some of her presentations. "The slide is based on research that has been conducted by psychologists, neuroscientists and other academics who found the unconscious mind vaster and more powerful than our conscious mind. It disrupts our perceptions of ourselves as logical human beings.

"We like to think that we're logical human beings and that we make decisions based on the facts in front of us. But the research shows that we really make split-second, emotional decisions that reflect the biases we have. And then what we do is look for the evidence using our conscious minds to support the decision that we've already made."

Tana's work also references optical and cognitive illusions. "Optical illusions are where our senses, or eyes in this case, trick our brain, and we believe what we see. There are a lot of optical illusions where what we see I'd like to work my way out of a job. I hope there won't be a need for equity consultants 30 years from now."

66

doesn't necessarily reflect reality. One of the most famous ones shows a young woman and an older woman together in one image (see Figure 2). What is quite interesting is that some people immediately see one woman, but it takes them awhile and some help to be able to see the other. Our eyes get tricked and we end up believing what we see.

"Our senses trick our brains and our brains trick our senses all the time. And this is a good example for people to reflect on, that what we see in front of us and what we are convinced is real or reality isn't necessarily so.

"When we talk about unconscious bias, we are talking about cognitive illusions. This is where our brains trick our eyes and we see what we believe. It helps to demonstrate that our belief system, the stereotypes we hold, the unconscious biases that we hold about particular groups, impact how we see people.

"In essence, an optical illusion is when we believe what we see, and a cognitive illusion is when we see what we believe.

"There are studies that have shown two pictures to people. In one there is a Black child on the ground and a white child is standing up. We ask people to come up with a story of what just happened. They show another group a picture where the white child is on the ground, and the Black child is standing, and again ask them what they think happened.

"The interpretation of what happened in these pictures and in the real world is usually based on the biases that we hold about Black children and who we see as more innocent. Who do we think is at fault? Do we believe what the students tell us about what happened, or even allow the students to share their perspective of the situation and what just happened? Or do we rely on our assumptions and biases?"

Another example Tana uses to help people understand how biases work is through word association. During an in-person workshop, she demonstrates this by posting some common words on a screen and asking the audience for the first word they think of when they see the words – young, black, night. In a roomful of attendees from various backgrounds and experiences, almost all give the same answers that first came to mind – old, white and day. "It's a way to demonstrate the immediate connections that we make," explains Tana. "These associations also come out when we use groups of people instead of words. If I mention a specific group, there is often an automatic stereotype that comes to mind that is common for most people's responses.

"These are the same stereotypes that we get from society, the connections that we have made over our lifetime. We hold common stereotypes about particular groups of people. When we speak about female students, Indigenous students or Black students, we often immediately make a connection that may not even be conscious. We associate them with particular characteristics."

Is it possible to overcome these stereotypes? "Yes," Tana says. "But it takes a lot of self-reflection. We have to start by thinking about and admitting that we have biases. We have to ask, 'How might my biases be impacting me in this moment?' When we're interacting with particular people, are we more anxious because of that person's identity, or more comfortable?





What assumptions are we making about this person and how is that impacting our interaction?"

What happens when our conscious mind and our unconscious mind are fighting with each other? "If we're making quick decisions in a highly charged environment where we don't have time to sit and reflect, then our unconscious mind wins out and we will likely be making biased decisions. If our conscious mind is to win out, we need to slow down that decision-making process.

"And if we're making policy decisions, we want to reflect on the policies, reviewed through an equity lens, to identify what the issues are. Going back over your work in a more thoughtful way can identify where your biases may have impacted the work and potentially not allowed you to make changes to create more equitable policies or programs."



If we have these internal biases, where did they come from? Do they emanate from our upbringing or our lived experiences? "We gain our biases through a number of sources," explains Tana. "Certainly there is our natural instinct and people have developed natural responses – fight or flight – and we develop reactions to people inside our own group or outside our own group.

"Part of it is just how our brains function. The research shows that at one point in time we're exposed to about 11 million pieces of information, but our brains can only functionally deal with about 40. So we need to filter in certain information and filter out other information. And what we filter in or out is based on the biases that we hold, because we let in information that confirms what we already think we know about the world."

As a Black woman with many lived experiences, personally and professionally, Tana knows that educators are the key to changing biases, stereotypes and perceptions, for themselves and for students. "I want school leaders to know just how critical their role is for the outcomes of students. How important the lens is through which they see the world. What is your lens? Do you see the students as future contributive citizens, deserving of an education and worthy of investment of your time? And which students do you see as deserving? I would ask that they do some work to clean that lens.

"One principal told me that he is often called to remove Black students who are hanging out in the hallway. Then he re-

> alized that there are also white students in that hallway, but he never gets called about them. It was only through that self-reflection that he understood this was going on and he'd never addressed it before because he'd never seen it as an issue.

> "So, the lens through which leaders are seeing the students, certainly the lens through which they're seeing the staff, could be cleaned so that they're creating more inclusive learning and working spaces and producing better outcomes for all students."

> Equity is a work in progress. But it is important work that needs to be done. Tana's work, experiences and recommendations are critical to understanding that work and moving toward more equitable schools. Because if we can, as she suggests, produce better outcomes for students, we must.

psweeney@principals.ca



CALL TOLL FREE (866) 882-0685

DIGITALSTUDENTIDCARD.CA



# Your Professional Learning

Plans to develop new opportunities continue

ur professional learning (PL) team has continued to offer a variety of opportunities that are responsive to Member needs as they relate to format and content. Understandably, participation in our PL sessions has declined since March 2020. We have continued to offer many opportunities in response to feedback indicating that the sessions are useful. Whenever possible, webinars and workshops are recorded and archived for Members to view on our website. Our plan is to continue offering these learning opportunities while working creatively to develop new ideas for your PL needs in our changing landscape.

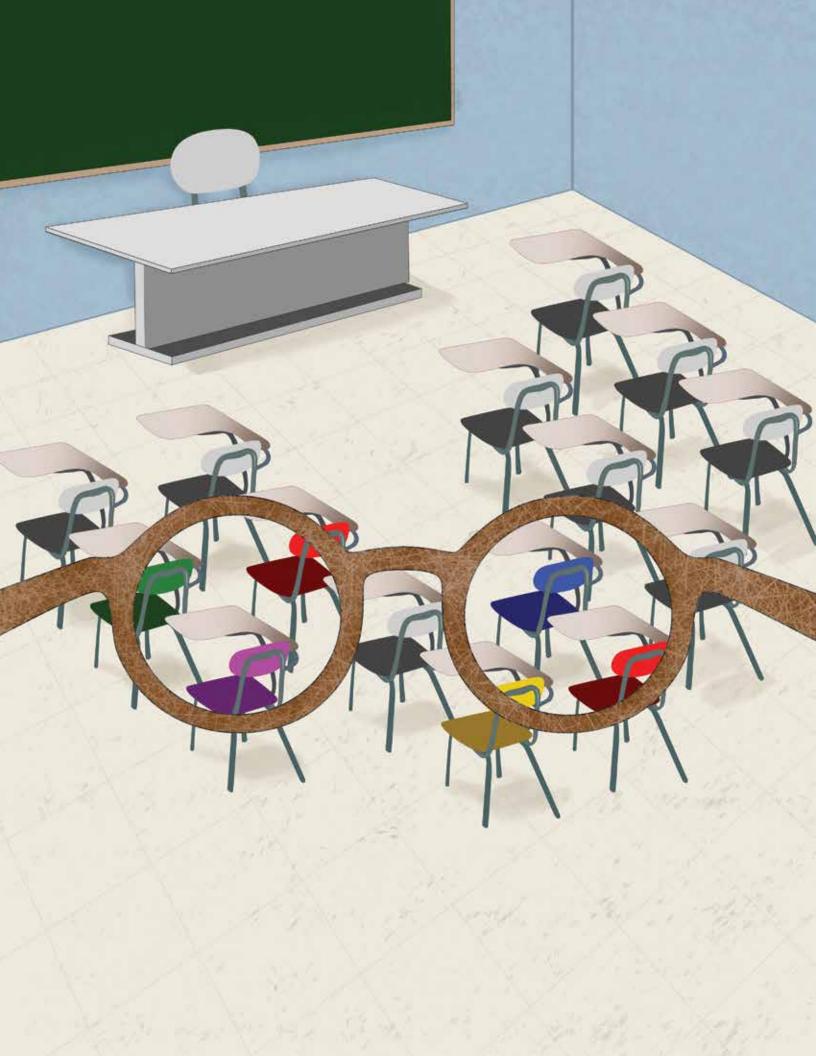
In addition to several additional qualification courses, in the next few months we will continue to offer monthly sessions on wellness and equity. The <u>themed PL</u> <u>sessions</u> for February, March and April are parent engagement, instructional leadership and social-emotional learning (SEL), respectively. We are also planning a <u>virtual work-</u> <u>shop</u> on social boundaries for February and another on conflict resolution in April. These sessions are designed to support principals and vice-principals in their work as leaders. We use different learning strategies and provide embedded opportunities for networking with colleagues from across the province.

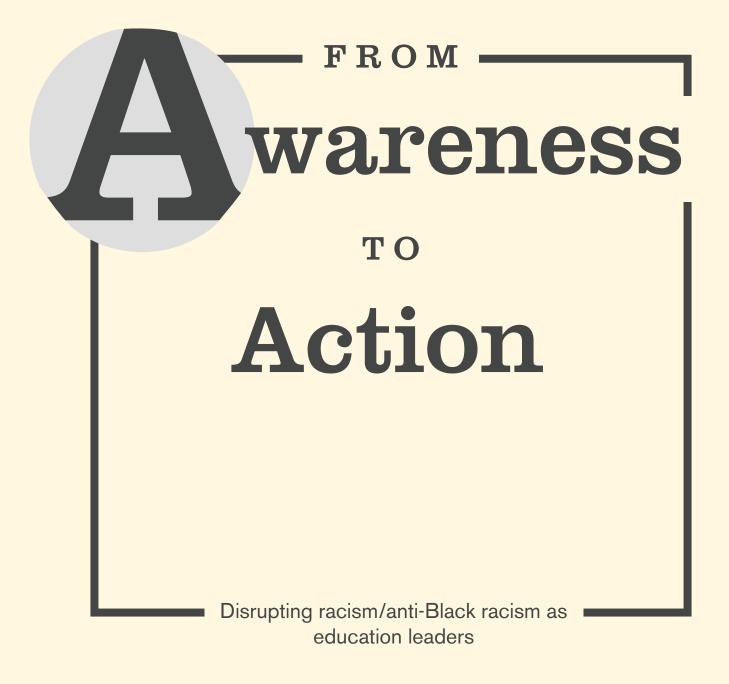
This spring, we will be partnering with the British Columbia Principal and Vice-Principals' Association (BCPVPA) to offer a number of joint learning sessions. These will feature expertise from both provinces with opportunities to discuss some of the challenges and strategies relating to specific topics in each province. We are looking forward to this partnership with our colleagues from the West coast and hope you will join us.

With health and safety top of mind, our <u>ICP conference</u> has been postponed to July 25–29, 2022. As such, we are turning our minds to summer learning for July and August 2021. While we recognize the need for you to rest and step away from your work, we have also heard that PL opportunities are helpful to some people as a way of focussing on themselves as learners away from the challenges of leading a school, even if it is only for a short time. Planning is underway for learning that will support a return to school through a trauma-informed lens, as well as opportunities for new administrators and a one-day conference.

As always, we remain open to suggestions from Members about professional learning format and content. If you have any questions or suggestions, send them to us at <u>learning@principals.ca</u>. If you do not yet receive our weekly PL Bulletin, which features upcoming learning opportunities, you can sign up to do so on our website. ▲

learning@principals.ca





By Dr. Andrew Campbell and Kaschka Watson

Illustration by LynSow Creative

As education leaders, we have grappled with our lived experiences of racism/anti-Black racism in our sector. We know that the fight against racism/anti-Black racism is a continuous one and we cannot stand by and keep silent while Black, Indigenous, people of colour (BIPOC) and other racialized groups stand alone at the forefront of this fight for equity and social justice. Many of us may shy away from engaging in courageous conversations about racism/anti-Black racism and other forms of discrimination because we might not have experienced them or may fail to see the disparities because of our privilege.

It is time for all of us, education leaders and citizens alike, to take action that will disrupt and eradicate racism/anti-Black racism in our education systems. If we have forgotten the impact of decades of racism that have plagued our systems and society, the worldwide protests over race and policing resulting from the 2020 deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery have revitalized the trauma and pain and refocused our attention to racial violence that knows no bounds in dehumanizing Black people and reinforcing the systemic barriers that exist. The time for settling with just being aware of racism/anti-Black racism has long passed. The time for awakening the need for change and taking intentional and deliberate actions to address racism/anti-Black racism is now. We will not join the ranks of those who have neglected change and are constantly asking our BIPOC students and their communities to wait for change. They have waited long enough, and if education leaders are to move away from simply settling with being aware of racial disparities, they must act to identify, disrupt and remove systemic barriers in education. This can be accomplished by

- understanding self-as a leader
- engaging in courageous conversations
- fostering an inclusive culture and climate
- creating and remediating policies and practices with an equity lens and
- practicing advocacy leadership.

#### **Understanding Self as a Leader**

Principals are charged with leading teachers, students and staff through equitable practices. However, before we can truly lead equitably, we must first understand self as a leader. We have to know who we are by being self-aware of our own biases and prejudices. Understanding self means that we are in tune with ourselves and are able to undergo self-examination of our privilege and power as leaders. We are aware of our unconscious biases that might impede us from making equitable decisions (Deloitte, 2012). Principals can better understand who they are as leaders if they are authentic in the process of self-reflection. The work towards dismantling racism/anti-Black racism in schools is a persistent challenge for leaders who lack authenticity.

Some education leaders engage in performances. They put on a show by leveraging opportunities like global protests against racism/anti-Black racism by organizing seminars and workshops to meet school compliance. They want to say, "I did the work," but in reality they have just checked yet another box. There is no follow-up, no growth and no change. Once the dust settles, it is back to regularly scheduled programming. They are back to square one because they have not yet unpacked who they are as leaders.

We are challenging our principals, viceprincipals and education leaders to engage in critical self-reflection to fully understand themselves and the philosophy of their pedagogical practices (Campbell & Watson, in press). We strongly believe that "who we are, impacts how we lead" (DR. ABC). If leaders don't know who they are, they will not know what it means to disrupt and what actions must be taken to disrupt racism/anti-Black racism in their schools

#### Engaging in Courageous Conversations

Leaders who want to disrupt must be prepared and equipped to engage in courageous conversations. Participating in such conversations means not being afraid to speak up and speak out; it's being upfront about whiteness and white supremacy and acknowledging the many ways leaders pathologize (Shields et al., 2005) our BIPOC students through deficit thinking. Leaders cannot say that they are invested and committed in identifying and removing systemic racism barriers for BI-POC students if they are unwilling to speak against racism and injustice when they see it.

Engaging in courageous conversations ignites the need for change, which requires being bold and brave in calling out issues of inequities and using privilege to lift the voices of BIPOC students and their communities who are faced with racial injustices. White education and community members alike must speak out and demand change on the interpersonal and institutional levels. The fight for justice will not be won by Black and Indigenous communities alone (Brady, 2020).

We know that the road to disrupting racism/anti-Black racism in our schools is a meandering trajectory filled with obstacles that might cause many of us to detour from the path. Therefore, we want to leave leaders with eight good practices for engaging in courageous conversations.

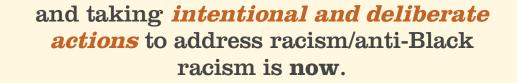
- 1. Share your story
- 2. Come prepared to learn
- 3. Come prepared to unlearn
- 4. Check your biases
- 5. Stay engaged
- 6. Speak your truth
- 7. Experience discomfort
- 8. Move to action

(Campbell, 2019).

# Fostering an Inclusive School Culture and Climate

Our schools must be a space and place where all our students want to be and have a sense of belonging. "Too many of our students are made to feel like they are strangers in schools as if they are interrupting something" (DR. ABC). Leaders must ensure that our students feel like the classroom is theirs. We play a critical role in influencing, creating and sustaining an inclusive school culture and climate. This is why our actions matter - how we act to achieve such an environment. We have to respond to all of our students' diverse needs and disrupt existing racism/anti-Black racism barriers that disenfranchise BIPOC students from achieving their fullest potential. Leaders thrive in fostering inclusive school culture and climate by changing and disrupting content, practices, structures and strategies within their schools to tackle racial inequities and systemic barriers that put BIPOC students at a disadvantage of being successful.

Educators shape their school culture and climate by engaging in inclusive practices that rise above the challenges of inequities and the status quo that often perpetuate racism and systemic racism in education. They foster inclusive school cultures and climates by being transformative. They consistently act to change their teachers' and staffs' attitudes in how they view BIPOC students and the role they play toward eradicating racism/ anti-Black racism in our education system. Leaders who are transformative form a "comThe time for *awakening* the need for *change* 



munity of practice" for equity and social justice in their schools (Szpara, 2017), assessing the culture and climate and addressing the systemic barriers that create opportunities that foster diversity, inclusion and equity for all students. By changing their mindset, leaders can examine how they see their BIPOC students and use an equity lens to create and remediate policies and practices that impact their BIPOC students' experiences.

#### Creating and Remediating Policies and Practices with an Equity Lens

Yet another term, "equity lens," has taken root in the system, but do we understand the responsibility of looking at things through an equity lens? Equity lenses are not rosecoloured glasses; they are not fashionable and in style. Rather, an equity lens is meant to disrupt our settled and satisfied ideas. Applying an equity lens illuminates the inequities we fail to see or consciously ignore. As leaders we must be honest about change and what is needed.

To effect positive change in their students and eradicate racism/anti-Black racism in their schools, leaders must be vigilant when it comes to the creation of policies. Many of the policies and practices in our schools today do not cater to the needs, nor provide equitable opportunities, for our BIPOC students. They are moulded in one clear-cut design that caters to students from the dominant group in our society. Not only have we heard BIPOC students sharing that they do not see themselves and/or experiences reflected in the curriculum of particular programs, but we have seen and experienced this curriculum gap ourselves at various stages of our experiences in the United States and across North America. A lack of diversity and inclusion of differences and cultures have been absent from the majority of our school curriculum policies, which have constantly been embedded with colonial ways of knowing and being.

BIPOC students have been disproportionately impacted in education due to the streaming of K-12 students into courses and programs. This streaming prevents them from actually progressing academically. These policies and practices taint BIPOC students longterm, because of the barriers that are attached to them. It is evident that even when BIPOC students manage to pursue postsecondary education, they are underprepared compared to their counterparts who were not streamed, which leads to large scale dropout rates of BIPOC students.

Education leaders must be purposeful in their role and use their power and privilege to create and remediate policies and practices rooted in systemic racism and act to make them more equitable and inclusive of all students. Schools and other education institutions must insist on having diverse representation at decision-making tables and on committees that construct policies and best practices. Having diverse representation matters, and will ensure that all students' needs and opportunities for success are exhausted before policies and practices are enforced in our education processes.

#### Practicing Advocacy Leadership

Addressing racism/anti-Black racism as education leaders is complex, regardless of whether an equity framework or a human rights framework is employed (Dua & Bhanji, 2017). However, in times like these when our systems are being tested during the COVID-19 pandemic to provide access and equitable solutions to students, particularly our BIPOC students who are further being marginalized due to systemic racism, education leaders should engage in advocacy leadership.

Leaders cannot stand by and allow the work of equity, diversity and inclusion in our schools, policies and actions to take a backseat (Green, 2020). They should practice advocacy leadership, which is needed to fight the persistency of racism/anti-Black racism in our education systems. The disruption of racism will require us to speak out against racial disparities impacting our BIPOC students from being successful. Leaders are better positioned to influence equitable changes in schools and advocate for social justice for all students.

Advocacy leadership calls upon leaders to be less silent and static in their actions and be the voices of their BIPOC students and their communities in taking concrete steps to call out for change in inequities. Practicing advocacy leadership means not being afraid to use their influence to lead actions that drive systemic changes. We see leaders who practice advocacy leadership as being bold and willing to challenge the status quo, knowing that their push for equity for BIPOC students

# HELPINC PECOPLE WORK TOGETHER BETTER Lize Online Training Baturing instructors and coaches "Stellt workshop - full of real world role plays and vides." Togetated the way the instructors established a co-learning Baturing instructors and coaches Mathematication in the static sta



Visit sfhgroup.com for 2021 sessions.

Ask us about our extensive experience teaching people in the education field.





Windsor Law University of Windsor

1.800.318.9741

contact@adr.ca

sfhgroup.com

may make others feel uncomfortable. They do not second guess or deviate from that push for change because they know it is the right thing to do.

Recognizing and understanding that the issues of racism/anti-Black racism have constantly marginalized BIPOC students may cause leaders to become unpopular or put them in the spotlight. Still, they accept that because their actions are attached to achieving equity for all students. Advocacy leadership requires empowering BIPOC students toward eradicating racism/anti-Black racism in education and providing students with the opportunity to contribute to the disruption of racism/anti-Black racism in their everyday lives.

#### Conclusion

The fight against racism/anti-Black racism is one that we must all recognize and do our part to join with our BIPOC brothers and sisters to



# Get the scoop!

Be the first to know about new contests, special offers, insurance news & more!

Subscribe to our electronic communications and you will be entered to win a

## \$500 gift card of your choice.

#### Enter today! OTIPinsurance.com/OPC-subscribe

Win one of twelve \$500 gift cards offered through Tango Blast Rewards operated by Tango Card, Inc. Contest closes August 31, 2021. Open to all active and retired Ontario education community members, at least 18 years of age and resident of Ontario. Enter at: otipinsurance.com/opc-subscribe. No purchase necessary. Contest can only be entered once. Selected contestants must correctly answer unaided, a mathematical, skill-testing question before being declared a winner. Odds of winning depend on number of eligible entries received through OTIP and Edvantage websites by each draw date. See full terms and conditions at otipinsurance.com/subscribe-to-win-rules. The gift card merchants represented, including Tango, are not sponsors of the rewards or otherwise affiliated with this offer. E-gift cards are subject to the issuer's terms and conditions.

take concrete actions to help identify, mitigate and remove systemic racism in our education systems. No longer can we shy away from having those hard conversations that make us feel uncomfortable. Our practices must be bold if we are to champion change that will lead to equity for all students regardless of their diverse backgrounds. We are not powerless in our actions; our power and privilege as leaders provide us with the platform to engage in courageous conversations and create an inclusive school culture and climate for our BIPOC students to thrive academically.

Disruption leads to change, and by disrupting the status quo that often perpetuates systemic racism in education, we are paving the landscape for reform that will foster diversity of thought, inclusion and equity for all our students. The time is now to embrace change towards social justice for all. ▲

Dr. Andrew B. Campbell, PhD in Educational Leadership, Policy and Diversity, is a faculty member in the Master of Teaching Program at the University of Toronto, and an Adjunct Assistant Professor at Queen's University. His research and teaching focus on issues of equity, diversity, inclusion, racism/anti-Black racism, educational leadership, Black LGBTQ+ issues, and Teacher Performance Evaluation.

≥ ab.campbell@utoronto.ca

Kaschka Watson, PhD candidate in the Educational Leadership and Policy Program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, focuses research interests in inclusive leadership and policy, diversity and leadership, gender studies in education, social justice and equity, higher education policy and underrepresented groups in education. @DRABC14

kaschka.watson@mail.utoronto.ca

#### REFERENCES

Brady, J. (2020). The deep roots of racism right here in Canada. OISE. Retrieved from https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/oise/ News/2020/The\_deep\_roots\_of\_racism\_right\_here\_in\_Canada.htm

Campbell, A. B., & Watson, K. R. (in press). Disrupting and dismantling deficit thinking in schools through culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy. Manuscript submitted for publication. In Gélinas-Proulx, F., & Shields, C. M. (Eds.), Leading for systemic educational transformation in Canada: Visions of equity and social justice (pp. 115-135). University of Toronto Press.

Deloitte. (2012). Inclusive leadership: Will a hug do? Retrieved from https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/ au/Documents/human-capital/deloitte-au-hc-diversity-inclusive-leadership-hug-0312.pdf

Campbell, A. B. (2019, November 1). Eight "good practices" for engaging in courageous conversations [Web blog post]. Retrieved from https://www.queensu.ca/connect/ equity/2019/11/01/eight-good-practices-for-engaging-incourageous-conversations/

Dua, E., & Bhanji, N. (2017). Mechanisms to address inequities in Canadian Universities: The performativity of ineffectiveness. In Henry, F., Dua, E., James, C. E., Kobayashi, A., Li, P., Ramos, H., & Smith, M. S. (Eds.), The equity myth: Racialization and Indigeneity at Canadian universities (pp. 115-154). Vancouver. BC: UBC Press.

Green, D. O. (2020). The invisibility of EDI during uncertain times. The Institutional Diversity Blog. Retrieved from http://institutionaldiversityblog.com/the-invisibility-of-edi-during-uncertaintimes/

Mulnix, A. B. (2020). From inclusion to equity: Pedagogies that close achievement gaps. Faculty Focus. Retrieved from https:// www.facultyfocus.com/articles/effective-classroom-management/from-inclusion-to-equity-pedagogies-that-close-achievement-gaps.

Shields, C., Bishop. R., & Mazawi, A. (2005). Pathologizing practices: the impact of deficit thinking on education. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Singleton, Glenn E. Linton, Curtis. (2006). Courageous conversations about race: a field guide for achieving equity in schools. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Szpara, M. Y. (2017). Changing staff attitudes through leadership development and equity teams. In A. Esmail, A. Pitre, & A Aragon (Eds.), Perspectives on diversity, equity, and social justice in education leadership (pp. 79-98). Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield.



**ONTARIO ACCREDITED SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL** 

#### CONSIDER AN EDUCATIONAL ADVENTURE IN THE LAND OF THE PHARAOHS!

#### About the School

The Canadian International School of Egypt (CISE) (www.cise-egypt.com) is a Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 international school in Cairo, Egypt. CISE provides its 1,400+ students with an Ontario education experience leading to the awarding of the 'Ontario Secondary School Diploma'. The school is approved by the Egyptian Ministry of Education and listed on the Ontario Ministry of Education website as an authorized Overseas Private School. CISE has been bringing Ontario education to Egypt for 18 years.

The secondary division of the school serves 450 students in Grades 9-12. The Principal is supported by a full-time Vice-Principal.

The school is a bridge across cultures and currently supports students from 20+ different countries although the majority of students are Egyptian or Egyptian-Canadian.

#### About the Position

CISE is looking for an innovative and experienced education leader with a fully articulated vision for education that prepares students for successful living in the complex 21st century. A sense of adventure and an abiding interest in cultural diversity are givens. The successful applicant would assume the position effective August 1, 2021.

A complete detailing of the parameters of the position as well as essential contractual details and application procedures can be found at http://cise-eg.com/sec.principal

By Nicole Miller Illustration by Cristian Fowlie Uppopulation Uppopula

Reshaping education with passports and passion projects

School

How can schooling transform as a result of the upending of 2020? With the social unrest in the United States and Canada in response to anti-Black racism, increased concerns by marginalized groups and the highlighting of extreme inequities during a pandemic, we know that school can, and should, learn from these lessons and change. Returning to our old ways is always tempting, as change can be scary, and what was "normal" feels most comfortable for many of us. We need courageous leadership to look into communities and ask how we can do better. How can we upcycle schooling?





Upcycling, defined in environmentalism, is the process of creatively reusing something to create something better and of higher value than the original item. In education, we have a chance right now, unlike any time in recent history, to redefine what school looks like. We can look at things anew and build something that is more inclusive, more equitable and better reflects student and parent voice.

I have been a principal for seven years, an administrator for 10 and a teacher for many years before that. In my first principalship, I was fortunate to have a parent group that was truly interested in building a school that engaged our families and welcomed them back into a building where they felt historically unwelcome. Many had been students at the same school years before and were reluctant to come in and discuss their children's progress. They simply didn't trust the school. It was hard to get parents to attend school council meetings. We started a number of community events, including a staff-funded breakfast club, a walking bus to school (we walked up to the buildings that fed into the school on Walk to School Wednesday and picked up the kids before school), a community garden and more. School council meetings were held off-site, closer to the homes of the parents. We worked hard to be creative about supporting student learning. By the fourth year, we had built an engaging environment and achievement on the standardized EQAO test had risen more than almost any other school in the board that year.

We learned how essential parent engagement and student voice are to educational improvement. It was powerful learning to see what happens when distributed leadership meets servant leadership. Having said that, one thing it did not do was shift the way school works for all kids and families.

The best example of my own failure in this goal was a situation with an Inuit family. The children were often arriving at school at 11:00 a.m. or later. They were behind in their reading and math skills so we were concerned that they were missing literacy each day. In speaking with the grandmother, she explained that school didn't work that way where they grew up – kids stayed up late with the family and were able to sleep in and pop in to school when they could.

At the time, I had difficulty wrapping my head around the fact that our system failed to bend to accommodate these beautiful, happy, children and instead of shifting our literacy times or creatively organizing some afternoon learning for them, we continued to try and find "strategies" to get them to school on time.

The reality of 2020 has shown us that we can pivot to online learning if we need to, we can do both synchronous and asynchronous learning. We can do half-day in school and half-day at home learning. Kids can write their book reports in their pajamas at night. In short, we can do better and bend for the families we serve to engage all students in the way that is best for them. It is time to upcycle education. Our goals for addressing anti-Black racism, inequitable and inaccessible situations for students with learning challenges and a destreaming of secondary courses will not be successful unless there is true systemic change and new ways for students to access curriculum and learning.

As a doctoral student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), I have worked extensively on the idea of school culture as it relates to unionized environments. There is much written about the ways collective agreements impede change through the restrictions on a teacher's day in terms of teaching minutes, preparation time and restrictions on the number of meetings that can be held in a month. In my experience, however, teachers are dedicated and caring individuals who are open to transforming the way school works for students. And we can do it by partnering with unions and working directly with teachers ready to lead the way. There are many creative alternative schools that exist in Canada and around the world. None of the ideas are specifically unique, as they have been gleaned from a number of systems and research on good pedagogy. But why have we adhered to the same thing for so long? I have heard the expression "rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic" in reference to the ways we identify and implement band-aid solutions to larger systemic problems at school.

So, how do we challenge and change the system to include student voice and choice, collaboration, a move away from "subject specific learning" and have teachers as true facilitators and supporters of student learning? It is time for intent to meet practice.

#### **The Passport School**

The Passport School is a secondary example but could be translated to elementary. The idea is to

take courses and divide them into modules that are chosen by the students and facilitated by staff proficient in these various areas. It is the creative timetabling of modules such that a student needs enough modules to earn the credit and can do it in a wide variety of ways. The beauty of this model is that over the course of a 4-year secondary school career, a student can access their learning at their own pace and through areas that are of interest to them. These modules will often offer cross-curricular course hours through projectbased learning and collaborative team teaching between various departments.

As an example, in Ontario a single course such as physical education is made up of 110–120 hours in adherence to the *Education Act*. For some students (let's say me), physical education was, at times, an exercise in embarrassment and self-loathing. When I think back to this subject, I enjoyed some things – like swimming – but

#### HOW DO WE START PASSPORT LEARNING?

- 1. Involve student voice by collecting information about what kids want to learn and do.
- Include teacher expertise, interest and availability by having teachers review what students have articulated and provide the correct number of teaching hours spaced out over the term.
- Create a horseblanket (schedule) that ensures students can get a certain number of hours per term, offering a wide variety of module hours.
- **4.** Ensure the modules offer hours in more than one subject whenever possible.
- 5. Create plans with students that work for them, at times that work for them, and with no "dead end" courses.

In her book, **Limitless Minds**, **Jo Boaler** talks about the achievement gap for African American students in calculus at the University of California. The gap dropped to zero and African American and Latino students began to out-perform their white and Asian classmates when they were taught in a supportive environment and were taught to collaborate on problem solving.



hated other things – like basketball and gymnastics. In retrospect, what is the purpose of physical education? Is it to teach us to endure humiliation? Of course not. It is, hopefully, to make us enjoy physical activity and continue healthy living into the future. Wouldn't it be great if a reluctant participator could choose from options for their own passport?

- Volleyball Unit 10 hours over 10 days (1 hour a day)
- Swimming Unit ----12 hours over 12 weeks (1 hour a week)
- Rock Climbing Unit 12 hours over a weekend (trip-based, hours also provided for Environmental Education and Indigenous Landbased learning)
- Football 40 hours over a term team based play, 2 hours twice a week for the term
- Nutrition Through Cooking 2 hours twice a week for 3 weeks
  = 12 hours

Students construct their individual learning passport based on areas of interest to them, while also covering curricular content and big ideas.

In the above example, if a student participated in all of the modules, they would have 86/110 hours required for a course credit. Teachers who are passionate about outdoor education can do trips that provide hours for many courses. One camping trip could include science, geography, language (writing), lifeskills, history, survival and more.

And students who have no interest in sleeping in a tent on the ground would never, ever have to do that. Some may argue kids should be pushed out of their comfort zone, and I agree to a point. Building learning experiences that encourage struggle and creative responses, that activate skill building in teamwork, public speaking, project management, positive relationships and global competencies is essential.

Part of this learning will come from alleviating some anxiety and fear about school in general. I think we can agree that the "tear them down to build them up" method of education has left something to be desired.

This is not about having children avoid learning experiences, but there needs to be a way we can teach students about struggle and perseverance without having them feel isolated, embarrassed or disengaged from school.

This method of school organization also allows for many natural accommodations, making it more like a universal design for learning model. For example, students who have learning difficulties can focus on self-directed projects offered by teachers with expertise in reading, expressive writing, using their natural interest in a subject to motivate the gap-filling in areas of weakness. Students who find an entire term of a subject hard to manage can gain module hours in shorter module offerings. For example, one teacher may offer a full term in a cross curricular course looking at the roles of chemical engineers, and the same teacher might also offer one-week modules about specific scientists and their contribution to their field. Students and teachers will do a better job of creating exciting, multi-faceted module offerings.

#### **Teachers and Passion Projects**

A wonderful superintendent, Rod Allen from Cowichan Valley in British Columbia, gave his teachers and administrators opportunities to offer something different for students through their own passions. He set aside and funded days for students to sign up for a variety of extra programs offered by teachers who wanted to do something different with their teaching and learning. The big winners were students, who could meet other students from all over the district and engage in something they found interesting, like visiting the clam gardens on the Gulf Islands, indigenous textiles and beading, emergency preparedness, rock climbing and so much more. Teachers were invigorated and students had fun. Why can't we harness this passion all the time?

Teachers with interests in specific kinds of literature can offer book studies over the course of days or weeks that address all kinds of social justice issues. Data science and statistical mathematics can take hold in projects about Islamophobia or the ethics of horse racing. Teachers can take passion projects, link them to big ideas in curricula, and find joy with students who are interested in learning more.

This is just a brief overview of a much larger plan. School planning would ensure there were courses that addressed current events, difficult topics and history from new perspectives. Critical thinking would become a stated outcome. Rigor and excellence comes from students wanting to engage, to ask questions, to think deeply about important topics of today.

I have a deep passion for the patterns and beauty of mathematics, but sadly, I didn't find it at school. If we use data science to teach social awareness, understanding the story that numbers tell, critical literacy and the danger of misrepresenting data, students could emerge from math class without ever saying, "But why do I need to know this?"

The reasons for a passport school and upcycling concept? It's time that schools better engage the creative thinking and problem-solving skills our students will need as we move forward - addressing global competencies and digital citizenship. By having students drive engagement through an understanding of what they are interested in, we make the school fit the student, instead of the other way around.

Nicole Miller is a principal with the Toronto DSB and a doctoral student at OISE in the Education, Leadership and Policy Program.

ĭ nicole.miller@tdsb.on.ca



www.simeoncanada.com (416) 236-4896 or 1(800) 732-8804 Simeon I Supportive Hearing Systems Inc.

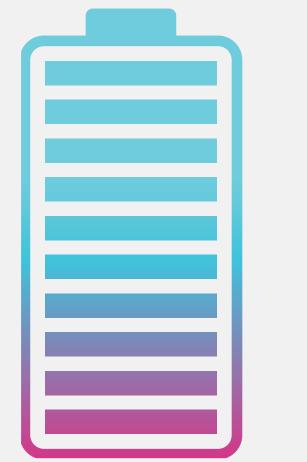
Simeon family of products.

Contact us and we'll send you a system to evaluate.

Visit our website

FINDING STRATEGIES TO

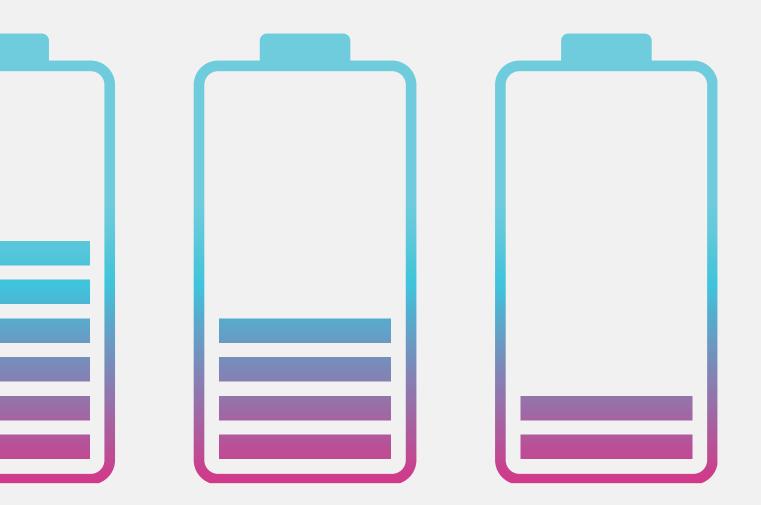
# deal with Member well-being during unprecedented times **strees**





By Ida Brass, Organizational Health Consultant, Group Customer, Canada Life

I think anyone would agree that the COVID-19 pandemic has been a real test of our resilience. As OPC Members, you're accustomed to the oscillating dynamics of the education system. Adjusting classes and re-aligning staff are part of the job, and work disruptions aren't unexpected, even in normal times. However, the demands and expectations on you have intensified with this pandemic. Rising to the urgent challenges and being thrust into the unfamiliar landscape of virtual education was one thing, but it wasn't a "one and done." We're well aware COVID-19 isn't letting up.



Keeping our schools safe is more complex than ever. Maintaining your own health and mental well-being is also paramount. It will help you withstand the myriad of stressors associated with CO-VID-19 and help you offer your staff the mental health support they need. Even pre-pandemic, roughly 500,000 Canadians missed work every week due to mental health issues. Ultimately, your well-being is critical to the success of your schools.

As leaders, you're undoubtedly focused on how you can best support your staff. Fortunately, there are many resources available to help, such as Canada Life's *Workplace Strategies for Mental Health*, a robust source of free, evidence-based tools, resources and strategies, hosted <u>online</u> (for physical distancing) and available in English and French. You can use these to help protect your psychological health, along with your employees, teachers and students.

The COVID-19 virus is serious and can be fatal. The pandemic is causing a multitude of stressors: fear, isolation, increased personal and work demands and, for many people, financial strain. The Conference Board of Canada and the Mental Health Commission of Canada (*Pandemic Pulse Check: COVID-19's Impact on Canadians' Mental Health*, July 2020) conducted a survey and found that 84 per cent of respondents reported worsening mental health. The most common concerns reported were family well-being, isolation/loneliness, anxiousness/fear and concerns about the future. A recent <u>Ipsos survey</u> found that 59 per cent of Canadians are struggling with mental health issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. We know that stress is normal and sometimes necessary to motivate us into action. Stress becomes problematic though when we experience too much of it for prolonged periods, with no reprieve to allow our brains and bodies to recover. Chronic mental stress can deplete our capacity for resilience and erode our coping abilities. It can also result in burnout. While stress induces a sense of urgency and feelings of anxiety, burnout results in a sense of helplessness, hopelessness and apathy. Over-achievers, which I understand is a common trait for education leaders, are often at high risk for burnout, partially due to self-imposed high expectations, sometimes coupled with a sense of being unappreciated. Both chronic mental stress and burnout can lead to poor physical health and more serious mental illness. This is what we hope to avoid.

It's more important than ever to shift our focus to our own mental well-being and prioritize caring for ourselves. This isn't easy at the best of times, especially when we're programmed to put our energy into supporting others, like our families, staff or students. During a recent webinar, Dr. Bill Howatt, author of <u>The Coping Crisis</u> (2015), likened mental health to our cell phone's battery. It might be fully charged, charging, half-full, drained or empty. So, if we think of our mental health in this way, as this pandemic and its uncertainties continue, our batteries are draining, unless we do something about it. We need to change our mindset and acknowledge that prioritizing self-care isn't selfish, it's necessary.

We all know this, but it is worth repeating. To help strengthen our mental health, we need to incorporate physical activity, even

#### Like other major insurance companies in Canada, Canada Life's

<sup>#</sup>1 cause

of long-term disability is mental illness. if we can only squeeze a little bit in each day. <u>Canadian Physical</u> <u>Activity Guidelines</u> recommend that adults engage in 150 minutes per week of moderate to vigorous aerobic activity. Doing so can also help reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes. You don't need to run a marathon – start by trying to incorporate 20 minutes of activity into your daily routine. Walk, do yoga or dance. Choose activities you enjoy, and you'll be more likely to stick with it.

Quality sleep is also important, as is being mindful about what you're eating. Again, we can't always achieve these goals, but we can try each day to be mindful of our sleep and eating patterns. I don't know about you, but when the pandemic started, I stocked up on comfort foods. That of course has led to what's dubbed as the "COVID 10" (pounds, that is). On a more positive note, because of COVID-19, we're cooking at home more, which lends itself to choosing healthier food options.

Dr. Howatt also described mental fitness as intentional actions a person takes daily to apply personal coping skills and behaviours towards resilience. He suggested that in order to maintain a level of mental fitness, we need to purposefully engage in activities that rejuvenate or calm our minds. Some examples he shared as good options included activities such as deep breathing, mindful meditation, keeping a gratitude journal, painting and listening to music. He noted an activity like yoga is particularly good because it combines physical activity with deep breathing, relaxation and meditation.

Of course, getting started is the hardest part. There are online tools available to help you incorporate these types of activities into a daily or weekly routine. You want to ensure that the online resources you use are credible. In the case of <u>Workplace Strategies for Mental</u> <u>Health</u>, for example, you will be able to access credible <u>mental health</u> <u>apps</u> and <u>exercises</u> for stress reduction and deep relaxation. One of the barriers to engaging in activities like meditation is our perception that we need to devote time we simply don't have. However, you may find some activities require only a few minutes each day. To get started, find the activity that fits with an amount of time you can manage. Once you start to recognize the benefits of the activity it may allow you to free up more time down the road.

In times like these, our brains are perpetually processing information and moving in multiple directions. Occasionally, our minds need a break to recharge. Taking regular breaks during the workday is a recommended coping strategy and improves focus and concentration. Break times are great opportunities to fit in rejuvenating activities. The previously mentioned *Workplace Strategies for Mental Health* also offers an email series, healthy break activities, for this purpose. The activities are designed to be relaxing, calming and energizing.

Another key element for maintaining our mental health is social connection. Human beings are social creatures, which is what makes it so hard to physically distance ourselves from each other. It's important for our mental health to find ways to connect, whether it's virtually or six feet apart. Connecting with others can also be achieved through micro-connections that we've previously taken for granted, like small talk with the local barista or store clerk. Helping others is another way to develop a connection. Maybe it's picking up groceries or writing a letter to cheer up an individual experiencing isolation. Connecting with others makes us feel good. It recharges our battery, which is why it's so important to our mental health.

This has been a long year and we're all experiencing a level of "COVID fatigue." Now, with shorter periods of daylight and cold winter weather, it will be far too easy to spiral into constant negative thinking. These negative thinking patterns impact our resilience, weaken our coping abilities and make a stressful situation feel worse. As much as we would like, we can't change the existence of COVID-19 (or winter, for that matter) but we can learn to think differently about it. Writing down our thoughts and challenging them with alternative possibilities is a common cognitive behavioural approach to shift to a more positive way of thinking. I recently participated in a webinar called Find Your Silver Lining Around the COVID Cloud – an engaging opportunity to accept the present situation and focus on what I was currently grateful for, instead of wallowing in fear and worrying about what has happened or what may happen in the future.

Perfectionism is another trait of over-achievers and a mindset that can be more harmful than good, especially during difficult times where there are factors outside of our control. Mary Ann Baynton, Director of Strategy and Collaboration for *Workplace Strategies for Mental Health*, talks about the importance of <u>letting</u> <u>go of perfectionism</u> in a video series created to support mental health through COVID-19.

When coping starts to be a struggle, take advantage of all resources available to you. Many employers offer employee family assistance programs that provide counseling. Your health benefits may also include counseling services. The <u>Ontario government</u> is also offering free virtual mental health support.

As you ponder the actions you could take to improve your overall health, remember self-care isn't selfish. Every step you take to maintain your own well-being contributes to the well-being of your family, your workplace and your community.

Canada Life offers health care benefits to OPC Members.

Ida Brass is also an organizational health consultant who specializes in disability management and health and wellness solutions for organizations. She has an honours degree in Kinesiology and over 20 years disability management experience. Her years as a rehabilitation consultant provided hands on experience with working with individuals struggling with a variety of disabilities including mental illness and supporting them through their recovery and anxieties with returning to work. As an organizational health consultant with Canada Life, Ida has a strong interest in mental health and advocates for psychological health and safety within our workplaces.

# Schools and the "new normal".

The COVID-19 situation is evolving and our response is continually changing, as lockdowns and restrictions are put in place and lifted. It is important to be familiar with the latest developments and ensure that cleaning and disinfection protocols stay up-to-date.

Conventional cleaning and disinfection generally involves manually applying cleaning and disinfection solutions and wiping with cloths.<sup>1</sup> This method has variable effectiveness, and spray-and-wipe cleaning and disinfection procedures in healthcare settings frequently do not achieve consistent desired results.<sup>2</sup>

#### We can do better.

The electrostatic application of disinfectants is a newer technology which, when used together with conventional cleaning, can significantly boost levels of disinfection.<sup>3</sup>

The electrostatic sprayer sends a negatively charged cloud of disinfectant that envelopes sprayed objects. The charged particles are attracted to surfaces, leading to more uniform disinfectant coverage. The electrostatic dispersed disinfectant spray can also reach hard-to-reach locations where pathogens may be beyond the reach of manual spray bottle and wiping procedures.<sup>3</sup>

#### Practical use of new disinfection technology.

A Canadian study, published in the Canadian Journal of Infection Control, conducted in several schools ranging from Kindergarten to High school, assessed the effectiveness of conventional cleaning and disinfection compared with the addition of electrostatic spray disinfection technology (Clorox Total T360<sup>®</sup>) to conventional cleaning and disinfection on the general hygiene state of student desks.<sup>4</sup>

The results demonstrated an additive effect in significantly reducing pathogen colonies on the student desks (N=36)<sup>4</sup>:

- Mean pretest colony-forming units (CFUs) per desk were 126.8.
- Following conventional cleaning and disinfection, mean CFUs decreased to 73.4 (P = 0.0003), representing a significant 42% reduction in mean CFUs.
- Use of subsequent electrostatic disinfectant spraying after conventional cleaning and disinfection further reduced mean CFUs to 54.2 (P = 0.02), representing a significant 57% reduction in mean CFUs.

The independent effect of electrostatic disinfectant spraying without an intervening conventional cleaning step was also tested on 64 desks. Mean pretest CFUs were 106.4 and after electrostatic disinfectant spraying mean CFUs decreased to 62.9 (P = 0.001), representing a 41% significant reduction in mean CFUs.

Conventional cleaning and disinfection procedures were effective in reducing viable microbes on student desktops. However, there was a significant additive disinfection effect when electrostatic spray disinfection followed conventional cleaning and disinfection.

#### Schools - Plan to prevent.

Clorox® is your partner in disinfection. As makers of disinfectants that are approved for use against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, we can play an important role in educating and working with school authorities to assist with setting up and maintaining cleaning and disinfection protocols that are in line with public health guidelines.

#### Invest to prevent.

It may be prudent to invest in proper cleaning and disinfection procedures and equipment, such as electrostatic spray disinfection technology. The cost of prevention may be lower than the cost of treatment.

When disinfecting solution is applied using the Clorox Total 360<sup>®</sup> system, the front, back and sides of surfaces are completely covered – much more effectively than traditional cleaning methods.

Clorox Total 360<sup>®</sup> is a one-step treatment when used as directed, so cleaning and disinfecting takes less time and less cleaning product is needed. It requires no Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and has no re-entry time after spraying.

The Clorox Total 360° System uses only Clorox° disinfecting and sanitizing products, like Clorox Total 360° Disinfecting Cleaner, a bleach-free formula that is Health Canada-approved and proven to be effective and safe to use on a variety of surfaces. Kill SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 in 2 minutes and 54 microorganisms, including cold<sup>+</sup> & flu viruses, MRSA and Norovirus.

#### Learn more at CloroxPro.ca

+ Rhinovirus



References: 1. Bright KR, et al. Occurrence of bacteria and viruses on elementary classroom surfaces and the potential role of classroom hygiene in the spread of infectious diseases. J School Nursing 2009;26:33-41. 2, Sattar SA. Promises and pittalis of recent advances in chemical means of preventing the spread of nosocomial infections by environmental surfaces. Am J Infect Control 7000;38:53-410. 3. Clorax Commercial Solutions\* Clorax\* Totar SA. System and Solutions. http://www.cloraxprofessional.ca/products/clorax-total-360-system/. Accessed January 15, 2021. 4. Douglas Forb, B& Sopha K. An evaluation of conventional cleaning and disinfection and electrostatic disinfectant spraying in K-12 schools. Can J Infect Control 7000;35:53-38.

# Protection you can't see

# Protect the students and staff at your school with the Clorox Total 360<sup>®</sup> System.

The Clorox Total® System with Clorox Total 360® Disinfectant Cleaner uses electrostatic technology and the patented PowerWrap™ nozzle, to provide wraparound coverage to the front, back and sides of surfaces – much more effectively than with traditional cleaning methods.

A one-step treatment when used as directed, it requires no Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and has no re-entry time. Cleaning and disinfecting takes less time and less product is needed.

Clorox Total 360<sup>®</sup> Disinfectant Cleaner is proven to be effective and safe to use on a variety of surfaces.

- ◆ A bleach-free formula that is Health-Canada approved (DIN # 02460769)
- ♦ Kills SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, in 2 minutes
- ◆ Plus, kills 54 microorganisms including cold<sup>†</sup> & flu viruses, MRSA and Norovirus

† Rhinovirus

Get invisible yet effective protection for your school with regular use of the Clorox Total 360® System

To request a demo, please contact Paul Frechette at: paul.frechette@clorox.com | CloroxPro.ca



# Focus

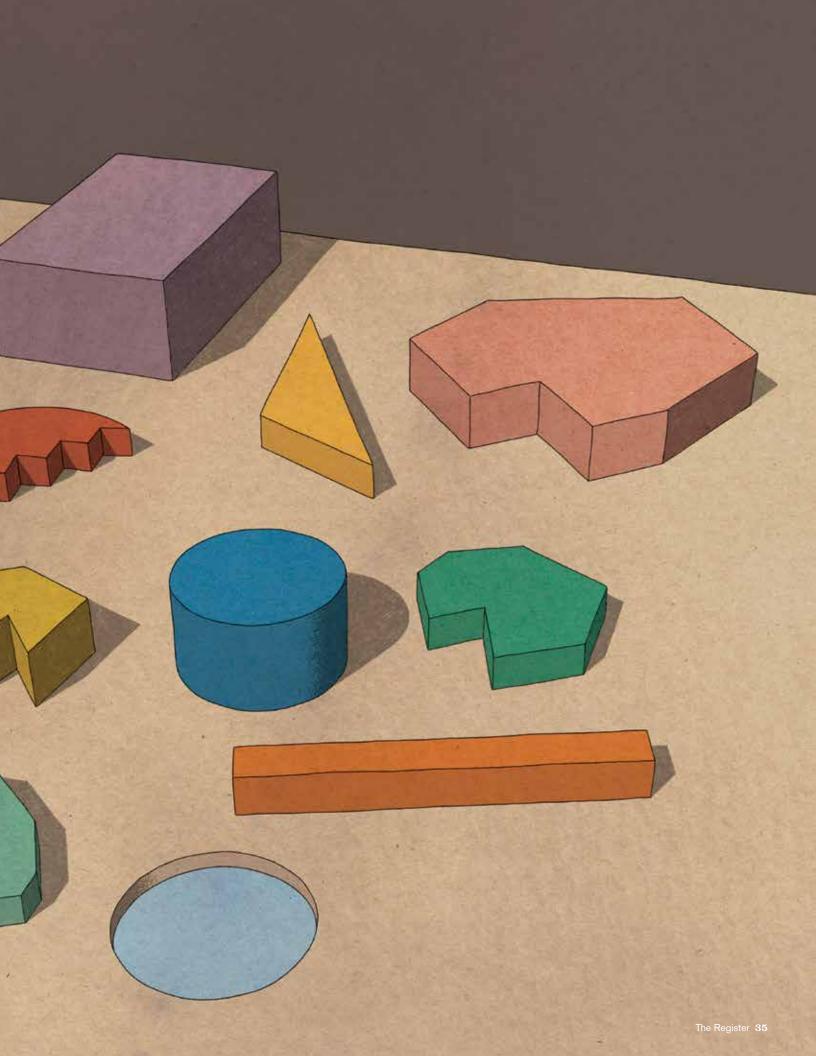
The revocation of Regulation 274

Fairnes

By Protective Services Team

Illustration by Marco Cibola

A



he role of a school leader is multi-faceted and carries significant levels of responsibility. Among the numerous pieces of legislation and policy referencing the duties of a principal, one need only review s.265 of the Ontario *Education Act* or Ontario Regulation 298 to illustrate the magnitude of these duties. One of the many duties, in relation to the "Assignment or Appointment of Teachers," is

that "the principal of the school shall have due regard for the provision of the best possible program and the safety and well-being of the pupils (Reg 298, s.19)." In this regard, a school principal engages in a prescriptive process of screening, interviews and placement, the goal of which is to secure the best possible teacher, to deliver the most effective program and provide the safest and most nurturing learning environment possible for students. Seems straightforward enough. It should be, except for the fact that the prospect of consistently getting the best teacher in front of a classroom was significantly hindered for more than eight years, when provincial hiring rules focused only on one of many factors by which to distinguish between teachers – their seniority on a list maintained by their collective bargaining unit.

The fundamental principles of providing the best possible program and ensuring the safety and well-being of students ought to be at the core of teacher hiring. <u>In a consultation paper</u> <u>submitted to the provincial government in</u> <u>February 2019</u>, we identified a set of criteria for determining who ought to be interviewed for vacant teaching positions. In priority order, the following criteria were proposed, emphasizing teachers who:

 a. have the required qualifications, including both the necessary Ontario College of Teachers certification and board prescribed qualification requirements, but



also the actual skills required to teach the subject matter credibly and effectively

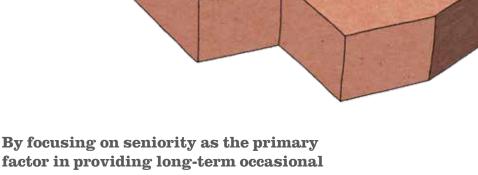
- **b.** are able to provide the best possible program
- c. are able to meet the needs of students and the school community, including considerations such as reflecting or being able to support the students' linguistic, cultural, ethnic and racial realities, and special education needs, a willingness to team teach and/or co-plan, pedagogical expertise in school/board/ministry goals, the ability to establish positive relationships with learners and an interest in engaging in the extra-curricular life of the school and
- d. have satisfactory appraisals and/or positive references based on previous teaching and/ or other relevant experience.

The recent revocation of Regulation 274/12, the "Hiring Regulation," is a significant victory for Ontario school leaders, and for public education in general. In this article, the Protective Services Team takes a look back at the initial rationale behind the regulation, the advocacy of the OPC and our partner principal associations against the regulation and the benefits to public education and student learning as a result of the regulation having been revoked.

#### Rationale for Regulation 274/12

Ontario Regulation 274/12 was filed by the provincial government on September 11, 2012 under the Education Act. The regulation established steps all publicly funded school boards were required to follow when hiring for long-term occasional (LTO) and new permanent teaching positions. At the time, the government indicated that the purpose of Ontario Regulation 274/12 was "to promote a consistent, transparent and fair hiring process for long-term and permanent occasional teachers." This rationale, on its face, seems quite reasonable, and the OPC has never been opposed to the fundamental principles expressed in it. Consistency, transparency and fairness in any hiring process is desirable and allows for the best possible person(s) to be hired.

Unfortunately, outcomes realized by a process built upon these stated principles are entirely dependent on how organizations define "fair-



factor in providing long-term occasional and permanent placements to teachers, there was no guarantee that students were receiving the highest quality education experience possible delivered by the most suitable teacher.

ness." Is it fair to hire someone based on their position on a seniority list, or is it fair to hire someone based on their potential to contribute to the regulation's inherent goals of program, safety and well-being?

Our focus on fairness has always been with students in mind – we have repeatedly asserted that it's unfair to students if schools cannot broaden the diversity of their staff because a teacher from the same racial or cultural background as those students is not among the most senior. It's also unfair to students when the best possible teacher cannot be placed in their classroom because others have more seniority.

Few other pieces of legislation have hindered a principal's ability to carry out the aforementioned duty as Regulation 274/12. Since its implementation, we have received innumerable calls and emails from Members, collected data through surveys and engaged in professional discussions citing concerns with the legislation's adverse impact on teacher hiring and, ultimately, on student learning and well-being. Through years of advocacy and intervention, we supported the basic goal of the regulation (best possible program, safety and well-being of students) but expressed significant concern with and opposition to the prescribed tools by which the Ministry of Education purported to achieve that goal.

On October 29, 2020, more than eight years after its introduction, the regulation was revoked

by the provincial government. Work is underway to create a new hiring Policy Program Memorandum (PPM). In the meantime, boards have introduced interim policies/procedures with respect to teacher hiring.

# Concerns Identified by the Ontario Principals' Council

Following the implementation of Regulation 274/12 and in the years following, we sought ways to track the concerns of school leaders who were responsible for selecting teachers to fill vacancies in their schools under the Regulation's rules. We surveyed our Members to gather empirical perspectives of the impact of the regulation on school operations, student learning and student well-being. More than 1,500 Members responded to the survey. The following statistics represent responses to a few of the key questions posed in the survey.

# In hiring under Regulation 274, were you confident that you were able to interview applicants who best matched the needs of students and your school community?

92 per cent of participants responded "No" while only 3 per cent responded "Yes" and 5 per cent responded "Unsure."

Based on your experience, should the hiring process consider individual attributes that

#### match school community needs (attributes could include language, diversity, specific skills such as IT, experience, etc.)?

97 per cent of participants responded "Yes" while only 1 per cent responded "No" and 2 per cent responded "Unsure."

#### Did [hiring under the Regulation 274/12 process] take time away from you supporting students?

82 per cent of participants responded "Yes" while only 12 per cent responded "No" and 6 per cent responded "Unsure."

#### [In cases where students were taught by more than one occasional teacher for a longer period of time than under the previous hiring process] do you believe that this new hiring process improved or hindered your students' learning?

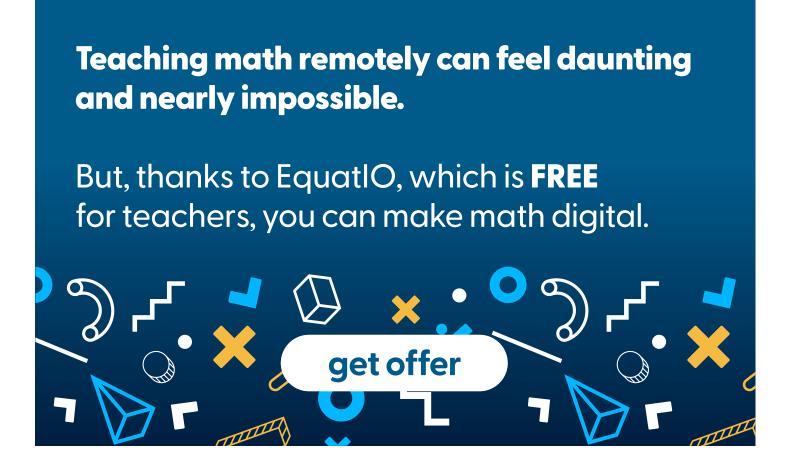
86 per cent of participants responded " ... hindered ... " while 0.3 per cent responded "

... improved ...," 2 per cent did not believe student learning was impacted in any way and the remaining participants were either "Unsure" or felt that question was "Not applicable" in their specific circumstances.

In January 2017, we also submitted letters to various government officials, outlining a summary of the challenges facing school leaders resulting from the implementation of the Regulation. In our submissions, we stated that "Seniority-based hiring ... values only one thing: time spent on a list. It does not value the quality of teaching, commitment to students or suitability for the role." We emphasized that the regulation hampered principals' ability to broaden the diversity of the teaching population of a school to ensure that it would reflect the school's students.

By focusing on seniority as the primary factor in providing long-term occasional and permanent placements to teachers, there was no guarantee that students were receiving the highest quality education experience possible delivered by the most suitable teacher. Numerous studies have demonstrated that the quality of a teacher is the single most important factor in the achievement of students. To ensure the greatest chance of student success, principals should have the discretion to select the best teachers for the specific circumstances determined by the vacancy.

As recently as February 2019, we turned to school leaders to continue providing examples of challenges created by the regulation. The process of hiring a teacher under the Regulation often took as long as 4-6weeks. During this time, students experienced a lack of continuity in the classroom as multiple occasional teachers cycled through a single, short-term position, often resulting in many weeks of uncertainty in the classroom environment for students and, ultimately, compromised learning. New graduates from education faculties could not be considered



for teaching positions even where they may have been the "best" candidate to meet student and school needs. It is often reported that these newer graduates have the potential to bring with them "fresh" pedagogical thinking and an enthusiasm for leading extra-curricular activities.

The absence of these qualities presented a clear deficit in the quality of education. In many cases, experienced teachers seeking to move between district school boards could not be considered for permanent positions, despite their skills and experience, since seniority within the hiring board was treated with the highest priority. This meant that a teacher who may have been considering a move to another part of the province may have been reluctant to do so or may have chosen not to at all.

Lastly, young teacher candidates who are economically less privileged were deterred from becoming teachers, since the need to compete for occasional and long-term occasional teaching positions often meant settling for part-time work and, therefore, a significantly reduced income. This had the potential of resulting in a hiring pool of economic "elites" which, in the long term, created a teaching cadre disconnected from the experience of economic disadvantage.

#### **A Better Alternative**

In our 2017 submissions to the provincial government, we indicated our support for a new regulation that requires transparency and fairness, without dictating that seniority is the determining factor for who is hired. We reiterated that our support for the originally stated purpose of the hiring regulation was "to promote a consistent, transparent and fair hiring process for long-term and permanent occasional teachers."

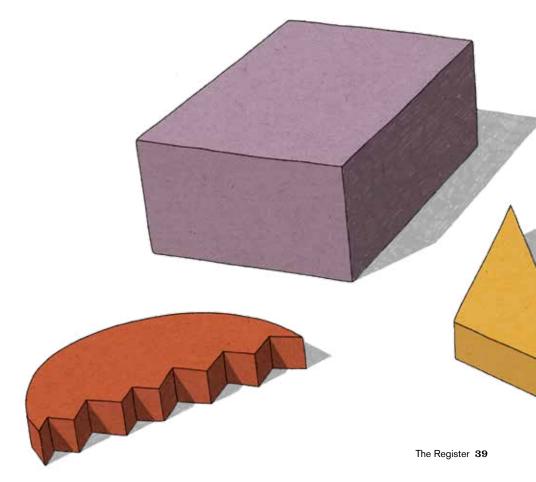
We maintained that a new regulation would prohibit interview teams from interviewing family members or close personal friends, ensure that interview questions were consistent and rubrics were applied fairly and, ultimately, leave discretion for teachers to be appropriately placed into positions at schools in the hands of those responsible for leading those schools. These are hiring principles with which, we suggest, the majority of school leaders would agree.

In a <u>CBC News article</u> posted October 15, 2020, Minister Lecce expressed his aspiration for provincial hiring practices stating that, "This is about giving principals more flexibility to hire the very best teaching staff," effectively forecasting the regulation's eventual revocation exactly two weeks later. Upon revocation, the ministry implemented an interim teacher hiring policy to provide district school boards with guidance to develop local policies. In addition, the ministry implemented a PPM to provide clear and transparent processes and principles that boards will use in finalizing their teacher hiring policies.

The OPC celebrates the revocation of Regulation 274/12 and is hopeful that, going forward, principals are able to engage in a more efficient hiring process that allows them to broaden the diversity of their staff composition and ensure that teachers are selected according to the requirements of the placement and the needs of both the students and school.  $\blacktriangle$ 

ĭ asayed@principals.on.ca

The OPC celebrates the revocation of Regulation 274/12 and is hopeful that, going forward, principals are able to engage in a more efficient hiring process that allows them to broaden the diversity of their staff composition and ensure that teachers are selected according to the requirements of the placement and the needs of both the students and school.



### Mark Your Calendar

Register to participate in our upcoming online professional learning offerings.

Supporting Student Mental Health Webinar Series March 25 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

New Math Curriculum Professional Learning Network #3 March 30 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Using Anti-Oppressive Language March 31 3:00 – 4:00 p.m.

PDC – Module 3 Leading an Equitable and Inclusive School April 10 Apply by March 27

PDC – Module 16 Maximizing Your Personal Leadership Resources (PLR's) April 19 Appy by March 27

For more information on the events and courses listed, visit our online events calendar.



#### **OPC Staff Contacts**

President Ann Pace president@principals.ca **Communications** Peggy Sweeney psweeney@principals.ca

admin@principals.ca ca

General Inquiry

ls.ca

Professional Learning learning@principals.ca

Executive Director Allyson Otten aotten@principals.ca Protective Services M Aditi Sayed m asayed@principals.ca

Membership Services membership@principals.ca



## My Conversations With Canadians

By Lee Maracle Book\*hug Press, Toronto, ON Essais Series No. 4 ISBN 9781771663588

Reviewed by Krista Tucker Petrick

In her book of essays, *My Conversations With Canadians*, author Lee Maracle responds to a series of questions asked of her literature journeys over the years.

She tackles these questions with dignity and wit that bring the reader deep into the conversation. These are conversations from which non-Indigenous people should be left to reckon with their discomfort – what they thought they knew and what they did not even realize was unknown about themselves – their whiteness and ignorance, exposed by the stories she tells.

The book is made up of 13 conversations, and each chapter addresses a question posed to Maracle while she took part in book tours, workshops or as a keynote speaker. Some are titles that relate to times and events where a question was asked. Others refer to the actual questions she entertains on the road, such as "What do I call you: First Nations, Indians, Aboriginals, Indigenous?" (p.69).

Maracle tackles the hard issues that ought to be considered by the Canadian public – treaties, racism, segregation, gender equity and citizenship. She does not shy away from discussions of law, literature and love, welcoming readers into her vast reservoir of knowledge. Maracle is an inviting storyteller, and does not leave anyone out of the conversation. In contrast, she also provides no answers, leaving those who fully participate to determine what they will take away from this.

Maracle shares moments of anger towards the thoughtlessness of certain responses. Through clenched teeth, she demonstrates how she opts instead to meet people where they are. But as striking as the book may be, it is also humourous, poking fun not only at herself, but at Canadian society.

The strength of this read and these conversations lies in the fact that it is not with anger that the author is speaking, but from her lived experiences. The diversity of topics allows movement of her telling. While all are written in prose, some take on a song-like quality that moves the reader through them in a manner that has you nodding along, saying to yourself, "Yes! I need to know this! I need to understand this." Others use a lecture style, teaching the reader what they did not know and may have been afraid to ask. In our journey of learning, it would be settler-colonial to expect author Maracle to provide answers to the questions she has been asked year after year. If you are looking for answers to these unspeakable acts, this is not the book for you. What is enjoyable is how she engages the questions in a format that allows us to take them on in our own learning.

You will find yourself reflecting on how you are feeling as you read, and then finding a way forward. I sat in my discomfort, page after page, and worked hard to embrace it. I would recommend that non-Indigenous Canadians take up the challenge of reading this book. As Maracle says, "The creative mind does not know any stupid questions and often ferrets out great answers" (p.160). The invitations in these conversations will hopefully lead to settlers learning the truth to reach reconciliation. ▲

Krista is currently a vice-principal in the Waterloo Region DSB in Alternative and Continuing Education. She is a non-Indigenous PhD candidate at York University in the Indigenous cohort focusing on non-Indigenous teachers who teach the First Nation, Métis and Inuit Studies courses.

# **A Conversation Series**

We want to hear from you

We're starting a new series in *The Register*, inviting people to share their life experiences with us – an event, their history, how they have or are dealing with certain experiences.

We start our series with Isaac. He is the 10-year-old son of Dr. Karen Edge, a Canadian academic living in England and working at University College London. Isaac answers some questions about racism, from his perspective as a child with a white mother and a Black father.

# How would you say racism affects you?

Racism affects everyone, mostly. If someone is being racially abused, it will make them feel sad and bad, and I don't like that. There was an instance at my school, and I tried to put a stop to it. I think that's what I've done mostly, tried to put a stop to racism.

# Have you ever felt that anyone's been racist towards you?

There was this one time, when I was at the hospital, this boy kept saying that my mom couldn't be my mom because she was white. He kept trying to rub the colour of my skin off my face and saying, 'I don't like this colour! What is this?' It made me feel really sad. It made me worried and I still think about it. I think about how that affected me and how that affected all the people in that room who saw us.

# Have you ever witnessed racism in school?

There is someone at my school who has been racially abused more than once. I have seen it and I told a teacher, but it felt horrible. I felt like, why was this person doing this? What could they be doing it for?

# What advice would you give teachers to prevent racism in school?

I would just make sure you keep a close eye on it and try to talk about it. Talk to students about why it's bad and why you should not do it. Teachers could learn about the countries that their students are from. Maybe they could ask each person



where they come from, what they do in that country, what food they eat and stuff like that. Make sure all the students are involved and excited about their learning.

# Do you think some people can't see racism?

I do. And I think that might be a big matter in our society. I think that racism goes on everywhere and you just have to be aware. You always have to see what is happening and what is going on.

#### What could racism in the classroom look like?

Sometimes teachers could pick on kids who, let's say, are white or from another background. Teachers need to look for kids being threatened and people being mean to other people. Yeah, well, there's always one target on that person and that person feels it the most.

#### What message do you have for principals and vice-principals in Ontario reading your interview? Be aware of racism because it goes on everywhere. ▲

Karen and Isaac can be reached at K.edge@ucl.ac.uk or <u>@drkarenedge</u>.





#### GET THE GRADUATE EDUCATION YOU NEED.

The Queen's University Faculty of Education has designed the **Specialized Applied Graduate Experience (SAGE)** program to help you meet your goals for a graduate education on your own terms.

#### THREE CREDENTIALS, ONE PROGRAM

Our course-based, **fully online** SAGE program offers three different credentials for students, allowing them to explore topics, expand their resume and experience and grow as professionals.



#### Post-Graduate Certificate

Candidates will begin with a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education. Consisting of five courses in a specialized area, completion of this program qualifies students for advanced standing in two of the electives in the Graduate Diploma in Education.



#### Graduate Diploma in Education

After completing a Post-Graduate Certificate, candidates will complete our Graduate Diploma in Education, where they will examine their professional environment to understand it more deeply, to solve problems, and to effect change in a chosen area of concentration.



#### Professional Master of Education

The final credential and last step in the SAGE program is the Professional Master of Education which will elevate the skills acquired in the post-graduate certificate and the graduate diploma in education and apply them through a capstone project.

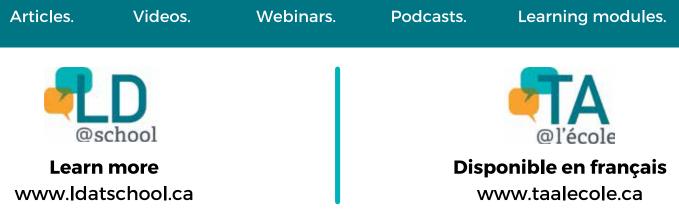
# EDUC.QUEENSU.CA/SAGE

## Learning may look different,

but students with LDs continue to need support.

# Learning disabilities are complex. We're here to help.

Make sure your team has everything they need to support students with learning disabilities (LDs) with our FREE online educator resources.



A project of the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario.