

## HALIFAX REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT REPORT

**PURPOSE:** To provide the Governing Board with an update on Diversity Management initiatives.

**BACKGROUND:** Over the past several years, the Coordinator, Diversity Management has provided an annual report to the Governing Board pursuant to the Diversity Management Policy (D.009). Although the current Diversity Management policy focuses on employment equity, it is important for the Governing Board to be informed about a broad range of diversity initiatives from both Human Resources Services and Board Services.

**CONTENT:** **Creation of Diversity Team**

In August 2015, the Board Services department was restructured to include staff that have primary responsibilities in the areas of diversity. The Diversity Team consists of the following positions:

1. Senior Diversity Advisor
2. Facilitator, RCH and African Nova Scotian Student Support
3. Facilitator, RCH and Mi'kmaq/Aboriginal Student Support
4. Consultant, English as an Additional Language (EAL)

The **Senior Diversity Advisor** provides executive advice to Senior Staff on matters of diversity, equity and inclusion. The Senior Diversity Advisor is responsible for leadership and coordination of diversity programming and supports for students, the ongoing implementation of the Racial Equity Policy and the Race Relation, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Rights (RCH) in Learning Policy. The Senior Diversity Advisor will guide, support and supervise a team of professionals focusing on the improvement of student achievement, provincial and municipal immigration strategies and community engagement.

The **Facilitator(s), RCH** is responsible to ensure the principles and best practices of race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights (RCH) are embedded in the delivery of programs and services for students. He/she will facilitate professional development for central office and school staff which fosters culturally relevant pedagogy and cultural proficiency and promotes a positive learning environment. The Facilitator leads a team of Student Support Workers and is responsible for identifying and developing programs, learning supports and strategies which respond to the needs of all learners. Each RCH Facilitator will have demonstrated experience and expertise supporting African Nova Scotian student and/or Aboriginal students and their portfolio will be assigned accordingly.

The **Consultant, English as an Additional Language (EAL)** is responsible for enhancing the Halifax Regional School Board's capacity to support Immigrant students and families through provincial and municipal partnerships. The consultant is also responsible for the implementation and support of the English as an Additional Language Guidelines, supporting School Principals and EAL site based

teachers. The consultant provides leadership and direction for programming for Immigrant students including: high school course development, supporting culturally responsive pedagogy, linguistically appropriate practice and teacher/administrator professional development.

### **Diversity Team Initiatives for 2015-2016**

#### **Implement Culturally Relevant Pedagogy**

The Diversity team will work in collaboration with Program department staff and School Administration department staff to implement instruction that is culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate to diverse students learning styles. This work began last year with developing an understanding of Culturally Relevant instruction with school principals, vice principals and central office staff who provide direct support to schools. As well, direct support was provided to implement Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in six of the priority schools and will be expanded to additional priority schools this year.

#### **Strengthen Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Rights (RCH)**

The Facilitators will work in collaboration with Program Department curriculum staff and school administrators to continue to ensure that the principles of RCH are imbedded in instruction and expand the understanding of the RCH in Learning policy at the classroom level. The Facilitators will support Principals in dealing with RCH matters.

#### **Expand Supports to Immigrant Students**

The Consultant, EAL will work in collaboration with provincial and municipal organizations (Halifax Local Immigrant Partnership (HFX LIP), NS Office of Immigration and Citizenship (NSOI) and Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) to facilitate the coordination of welcoming immigrant students and families to support their transition into HRSB schools and the culture of Nova Scotia.

#### **Strengthen African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq/Aboriginal Student Support**

The diversity team, through the work of the Facilitators, will work towards strengthening the support provided Student Support Workers and programming for Mi'kmaq, Aboriginal and African Nova Scotian students. The programming will continue to focus on student engagement and student success.

### **Recruitment & Hiring Initiatives**

Over the past year Human Resources has undertaken a number of initiatives in an effort to recruit a diverse range of candidates for employment with the HRSB. Some of these initiatives include the following:

- HR Staff represented the HRSB at a number of community based Job Fairs, including MSVU, Success College, YWCA, WADE Limited, Job Search Services and Job Junction.

- A comprehensive contact list of over fifty (50) community partners and organizations has been created for the purpose of recruitment and outreach. HR will often send job postings and staffing information to the contacts included on the list to promote outreach.
- The HRSB offered the maximum number of “Equity Contracts” permitted in the NSTU Local Collective Agreement. A total of sixteen (16) contracts were awarded - nine (9) contracts were awarded to candidates who self-identified as African Nova Scotian and seven (7) contracts were awarded to candidates who self-identified as Aboriginal.
- HR continues to work collaboratively with Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) to assist clients in applying for jobs and arranging opportunities for job shadowing within the HRSB.
- Two orientation sessions were held last year for new teachers who self-identified as equity candidates. The information gathered at the sessions will inform strategies needed to support the recruitment and retention of staff and provide support to new teachers in the beginning stages of their career. Additional sessions will be held again this year.
- HR met with two Aboriginal Employment Officers to discuss strategies to increase employment outreach with the Aboriginal community.
- The *African Nova Scotian/Mi’Kmaq Education Task Force Report and Recommendations* was presented to the governing board in January 2015 and all of the recommendations applicable to the HRSB have been implemented or are underway.
- Hiring Best Practices training was provided to new Principals and Vice Principals, emphasizing the importance of fair hiring practices.
- HR recently launched a Twitter and LinkedIn account which will assist with recruiting and outreach.
- HR Staff continue to support the Priority Schools in an effort to reduce turnover and increase diversity within the schools.
- In October, HR Staff will attend a career fair for HRSB students to promote teaching as a potential career and other professions within the HRSB.
- Work collaboratively with the Senior Diversity Advisor to develop a program to increase employee self-identification.

### **Respectful Workplace Policy**

In June 2015, the governing board approved the revised Respectful Workplace Policy, formerly known as the Harassment Policy. With the approval of the policy a new “Respectful Workplace Consultant” position was approved and assigned to HR. The Respectful Workplace Consultant has been hired and will develop a new Respectful Workplace Program for the HRSB. In addition to investigating harassment complaints under the policy, the Respectful Workplace Consultant will also offer services for all employees who may be experiencing conflict in the workplace. Services can be provided onsite or at other locations, and include confidential consultations, coaching, mediation, other restorative approaches and professional development opportunities.

**COST:**

N/A

**FUNDING:** N/A

**TIMELINE:** N/A

**APPENDICES:** N/A

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** It is recommended the Governing Board receive this report for information.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

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**To:** Senior Staff September 15, 2015  
Board September 23, 2015