

POLICY 390 Anti-Racism

The Board of Education of School District No. 83 (North Okanagan-Shuswap) recognizes the diversity of our school communities, commits to establishing environments open to all, and believes that all members of our community have the right to live and work in an environment that protects fundamental human rights and human dignity. We acknowledge that racism, in all its forms (including individual, institutional, cultural, structural) is embedded in our society and we support the ongoing commitment to eliminate racism. The Board has developed this policy in accordance with the British Columbia Human Rights Code, the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*, the *British Columbia Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom*.

Racism is a set of assumptions, opinions, and actions based on the unfounded belief that one group of people, categorized by colour, ancestry, or culture, is inherently superior to another. Racism is often implicit in attitudes, everyday behaviour, policies, and practices, and/or values. Racism has profound, adverse social consequences including discrimination, stereotyping, hatred, bullying, harassment, physical and sexual violence, social and emotional isolation, substance abuse, homelessness, school truancy, physical and mental illness, self-harm, and suicide.

The Board is responsible for providing an education system that is a safe, welcoming environment free from racism, discrimination, harassment, and violence and that is inclusive and affirming for all students, staff, and community members. The Board recognizes that racism in all its forms is harmful not only to those directly affected, but also to all students, staff, families, and community members. Staff of School District 83 have a responsibility to ensure schools do not perpetuate stereotyping, bias, discrimination, racism, or inequality. Staff also should respond with timely intervention when these become evident.

The Board expects each member of the school district community to work to eliminate racism and to address the effects of historic, organizational, systemic, and attitudinal racism by:

- i. committing to equity and inclusion in all contexts, activities, and places;
- ii. in developmentally appropriate ways, becoming aware of privilege, bias, prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination, and racism in all forms, and by making connections to the Personal and Social Core Competencies;
- iii. learning about how to act, directly or as bystander, against all forms of racism and hate crime;
- iv. developing cross-cultural interactions to create understanding, show respect for, and to celebrate racial, ethnic, and cultural identity.

Proactively addressing racism and oppression requires:

- acknowledgement that certain groups in our society are treated inequitably because of systemic barriers, individual bias, racism, and oppression.
- a clear understanding of how land ownership, and the forced displacement of the original inhabitants of this land, enables the ongoing oppression of Indigenous people.
- acknowledgement and increased awareness and understanding that we each have biases and that systemic and individual bias, racism, and oppression, exist within our school district, and may be perpetuated unless explicit, persistent, and determined action is taken to identify, challenge, and overcome them.
- the application of an equity lens at all levels and areas within school district including, but not limited to, policies, pedagogies, practices, program placements, and decision making.
- knowledge of practices and procedures which operate in school structures such as classrooms, hallways, and on school grounds that contribute to inequitable outcomes, including disparities in how Black, Indigenous, and Students of Colour experience education.
- knowledge of how curriculum and resource selections may reinforce bias and stereotypes.
- development of the skills necessary to recognize and respond effectively to a racist action.

School District 83 commits to equity by embedding anti-racist/anti-oppressive practices into its educational and operational functions to ensure that racism and oppression are not tolerated.