

ANTI-RACISM DIRECTORATE  
PARTNERSHIP, MID-YEAR REPORT  
Black Student Success and  
Excellence Initiative and the  
Pre-Kindergarten Summer Learning  
Program

TITLE ANTI-RACISM DIRECTORATE PARTNERSHIP MID-YEAR REPORT Black Student Success and Excellence Initiative and the Kindergarten Summer Learning Program

AUTHORS: The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement & Research and Development, Toronto District School Board

Copyright © Toronto District School Board (April 2021)

Reproduction of this document for use in the Toronto District School Board is encouraged.

For any other purpose, please cite as:

The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement & Research and Development (2021). Anti-racism directorate partnership mid-year report Black student success and excellence initiative and the kindergarten summer learning program. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Toronto District School Board

Every reasonable precaution has been taken to trace the owners of copyrighted material and to make due acknowledgement. Any omission will gladly be rectified in future printings.

## ANTI-RACISM DIRECTORATE PARTNERSHIP: Black Student Success and Excellence Initiative and the Pre-Kindergarten Summer Learning Program

The Toronto District School Board continues to be recognized for its leadership in collecting student-identity based information, and using it to inform policies, programs, and initiatives to support Black students' success. As a board, data is used to outline successes and gaps in achievement, well-being, and sense of belonging. This data, which includes additional research initiatives, are also used to measure the ongoing progress of system wide initiatives tied to many racialized students in public education.

In one such initiative, *Black Student Success and Excellence* (BSSE; TDSB, 2019) the TDSB has partnered with the Anti-Racism Directorate (ARD) to extend ongoing efforts to support Black students in classrooms and schools. This initiative, tied to student voice, teacher practice and leadership competencies, provides opportunities to change school culture by building the critical consciousness of educators and students alike. Research and with the BSSE aims to identify scalable conditions for fostering Black student success system wide.

To date the TDSB partnership with the Anti-Racism Directorate focuses on ensuring Black students obtain successful learning experiences in schools. The partnership focuses on two specific related but distinct initiatives in TDSB

1. *The Black Student Success and Excellence (BSSE) Initiative*: This initiative engaged educators and school leaders around issues of Black racism in schools by creating opportunities through which educators and students might build their critical consciousness in relation to race and learning in schools and classrooms.
2. *The Pre-Kindergarten Summer Learning Program*: A pre-Kindergarten summer program that used The Nguzo Saba Africentric principles (Karenga in Oliver, 1989) and Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP) (Ladson, 1995) to focus on four core areas of academic capacity in schools: 1) Belonging and Contributing, 2) Self Regulation and Well Being, 3) Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematics Behaviours, 4) Problem Solving and Innovating.

In the fall of 2020, the TDSB proposed to continue work in support of Black student success and achievement in partnership with the Anti-Racist Directorate. This new proposal was designed to support, extend, and deepen the implementation of the recommendations from the BSSE initiative as TDSB is within its third year of the initiative. The learning and practical experiences within the BSSE initiative continue to be invaluable as the TDSB responds to dismantling anti Black racism and improving experiences and outcomes for Black students. The recently established *TDSB Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement* draws on the experiences

and outcomes throughout the design and implementation of the BSSE as a key part of the Centre's operating principles and practices working across the TDSB.

This midyear report provides an overview of the actions taken within the initiative in the following core areas:

### Black Student Success Excellence (BSSE) Initiative

- Implement the recommendations from the BSSE Initiative which include engaging in capacity building with over 150 educators, implementation of critically conscious practitioner inquiries; and in-class/in-school co-teaching and curriculum design with educators and administrators; the 2020-21 BSSE initiative has increased to 21 schools



Projected Actions	Outcomes to Date
<p>Continued development and improvement in resources and curriculum with direct focus on teaching about race and positive racial identity development for Black students</p>	<p>Podcasts <i>TDSB Human Library: Conversations Around Equitable, Anti-Racist, and Anti-Oppressive Practice</i></p> <p>This is a podcast series, launched February 2021, comprising a collection of audio episodes on topics related to Equity, Anti Racism, and Anti Oppression in education. Episodes are open to the public and push educators to critically reflect on their pedagogy, as well as reimagine meaningful ways to deepen student engagement and community partnerships</p> <p>Specific episodes are tied directly to Black students' success and excellence and positive racial identity development. Some of the topics and enduring understandings in the series include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• African Canadian experiences and the Curriculum–Natasha</li> </ul>

Projected Actions	Outcomes to Date
<p>Improvement in Literacy and Numeracy for Black Students (Kindergarten to Grade 2, Adolescent Literacy) tied to the early literacy and adolescent literacy plan focusing on literacy intervention initiatives</p>	<p>Implementation of the DIAL program <i>Addressing Debt in Adolescent Literacy (DIAL)</i></p> <p>The DIAL program focused on collaborative inquiries at the school level anchored in culture-centred literacy theorists such as Dr Alfred Tatum and Dr Muhammad. Dr Muhammad kicked off the initiative with an hour-long session for TDSB educators. Dr. Nicole Weburns led three sessions in the school year on Black racism in Canada, anti-racism, critical consciousness practitioner and anti-racist work. The goals of the program are to use a culturally relevant and responsive approach to literacy teaching that nurtures and affirms students' racial, cultural and reader identities in multiple content areas; supporting the reader in building a positive reading identity through explicit strategy and skill development that is contextualized and encouraging students and educators to take a critical stance, to respond or to take action as they engage in the critical analysis and evaluation of text as it relates to issues of equity, power and social justice. DIAL schools and BSSE schools were supported through the purchase of the Sankofa Black Heritage Collection of non-fiction texts in addition to being provided funding to purchase professional teacher resources including Tatum and Muhammad's work. Educators were also invited to voluntary sessions on collaborative inquiry and the critical importance of student voice in</p>





Projected Actions	Outcomes to Date
	<p>teachers to built system capacity in these areas so that math teaching and programming honours and leverages the lived experience of Black students and is more inclusive for all.</p>

Continue to develop school and system leadership focusing on strategies to address anti-Blackracism to support implementation in schools and within the organization

*Anti-Black Racism: Facilitating,*

~~File | Home | Tools | Settings | Help | About | Log Out | Search | [Icons]~~

Projected Actions	Outcomes to Date
Development of Black student focused leadership programs tied to Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) in collaboration with Toronto universities (e.g, York University and/or University of Toronto)	Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) comprised C 298.68 575.04 224.7d] TJ [10.1 Tor



## References

LadsonBillings, G. (1995). But that's just good teaching: The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory into Practice*, 34(3), 160-165.

Oliver, W. (1989). Black males and social problems: ~~Prove~~ <sup>Viewed</sup> through Afrocentricity socialization. *Journal of Black Studies*, 20, 15-39.

Toronto District School Board. (2019). *Preliminary research report to the anti-racism directorate*. Toronto District School Board.