

August 31, 2020

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
22nd Floor, Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON
M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Lecce:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees for the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB), I would like to take this opportunity to request that the Ministry of Education join us in acknowledging the existence of systemic racism in society and the importance of addressing racism, hate and oppression of all kinds. The SCDSB rightly holds Equity, Diversity and Inclusion as one of our four key strategic pillars and we recognize that continual learning, reflection and improvement are crucial. We are committed to educating our students and staff about the importance of standing up to racism and the harm that it causes to marginalized groups in society.

Further, we would ask that the Ministry commence a review of all curriculum documents through a systemic racism lens and make the necessary revisions. Such needed updates would have tremendous impact in our classrooms as we strive to meet a key SCDSB operational goal which is:

- i. Educators will work to identify and reduce bias and barriers to ensure that curriculum and pedagogy are reflective and representative of the diverse identities of our students and families and of global identities.

Our students need to see themselves and their lived realities in their learning. With that being the case, the curriculum needs to be updated so that students see the various historical realities of the Canadian context, as well as the many positive contributions to society made by people from all backgrounds. We were pleased to see some movement towards these ends in the recently updated Mathematics Curriculum where there is now a focus on human rights, equity and inclusive education in mathematics. These revisions include the requirement to highlight diverse mathematical figures in history, so that students can see themselves reflected in mathematics learning supporting the development of their sense of self.

In closing, the Board of Trustees for the SCDSB respectfully requests that dedicated funding be re-instated to support the work being done in our schools through our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Department. While the board is appreciative of the financial commitments made by the Ministry in support of technology purchases and health and safety measures as a direct result of the COVID 19 situation, we strongly believe that the work of pursuing safe, supportive

learning and working environments for all students and staff is also critical. While we will continue to allocate funding from our Grants for Student Needs funds to facilitate the ongoing work within our established pillar of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, we are requesting that you join us in providing additional, dedicated financial support in this realm. The work of addressing racism, hate and oppression of all kinds is difficult work, but it must be done.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jodi Lloyd
Chairperson
Simcoe County District School Board

c: Hon. Doug Downey, MPP, Barrie, Springwater, Oro-Medonte
Hon. Jill Dunlop, MPP, Simcoe North
Andrea Khanjin, MPP, Barrie, Innisfil
Jim Wilson, MPP, Simcoe Grey
Hon. Caroline Mulroney, MPP, York-Simcoe
Chairs, Ontario Public School Boards Association
Board of Trustees, SCDSB
Steve Blake, Director of Education, SCDSB
John Dance, Associate Director, SCDSB
Brian Jeffs, Superintendent of Business and Facility Services, SCDSB