



Thames Valley District School Board

EQUITY

Dismantling Anti-Muslim Racism Strategy

"By creating this mural, we took the first steps into mending the shattered community that was left in the wake of last year's attack. A community that will have to work together in order to pick up its broken shards and repair them, in order to rebuild a safer space for us all."

— Esa

"We chose to represent puzzle pieces as hexagons like the honeycomb. This symbolizes strong and resilient bees working together to strengthen their honeycombs or in our case, our community. We also chose to incorporate bees into our mural because of their Islamic significance. In Islamic tradition, honey is viewed as a cure for many illnesses. In fact, the 16th chapter of the Quran is titled The Bee (An-Nahl)."

— Mariam

"We invited Mike Cywink, a local Indigenous artist to contribute a message as a way of honouring the land. He contributed Indigenous medicines that heal not only our hearts, but also mind, body and spirit by adding the four colours of the Medicine Wheel: white, yellow, red and black. In the mural, you will see blueberry and strawberry patches. Strawberries, also known as heart berries, are commonly used in Indigenous ceremonies to bring people together in healing and peace."

— Esa



Memorial Plaza Mural

"The London community is acutely aware of the lethal consequences of unchecked hate and anti-Muslim racism.

I am encouraged by the Thames Valley District School Board's leadership in charting new but needed ways to systematically address this racism in schools.

Anti-Muslim racism continues to impact staff, students, and families. There is no doubt that ongoing work is necessary to root out hate. The Thames Valley District School Board's Dismantling Anti-Muslim Racism Strategy is a critical step in challenging anti-Muslim racism and ensuring equitable outcomes for all students."

— Aasiyah Khan; Director of Education
National Council of Canadian Muslims

Our
London
Family

Photo: CTV News London

Memorial Plaza Mural contributors include: Wajeha Chams, Mike Cywink (artists), Aya Abdul Hamid, Meiad Ahmed, Maryam Al Sebawi, Mariam Boroot, Ayesha Islam, Esa Islam, Huda Sallam, Eeshal Salman (London Muslim youth), and Yasmin Husain, Hina Islam (project facilitators)



Acknowledging Indigenous Peoples

Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) is situated on the land now known as southern Ontario, a land that has been and continues to be the home of many Indigenous Nations. We are filled with immense gratitude to Indigenous Peoples who have been the stewards of this land since time immemorial and continue to care for it with wisdom and reverence.

We humbly acknowledge the deep and lasting impacts of colonialism, which have caused immense suffering and disconnection for the Indigenous Peoples of this land. Throughout the centuries, colonization has led to the displacement, dispossession, genocide and forced assimilation of Indigenous Peoples and communities. Their rich heritage, languages, and spiritual practices have faced suppression, leading to significant challenges in preserving and passing on their cultural knowledge to future generations.

The impacts of colonialism continue today, with the foster care system, mass incarcerations, water advisories, and so many other forms of systemic and environmental oppression. It is also seen through the ongoing colonization of this land, suppressing cultures, erasing languages, and fracturing communities.

We acknowledge the resilience and strength of the Indigenous Peoples who have persevered despite this systemic oppression and continue to assert their rights and reclaim their cultural heritage. We recognize the importance of supporting their efforts towards self-determination, cultural revitalization, and healing from the historical and ongoing trauma inflicted by white supremacy and colonialism. As we reflect on the past and present, we commit ourselves to fostering an environment of respect, inclusivity, mutual understanding, and commit to ongoing learning about Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

We recognize that Canada was built upon the colonization of Indigenous Peoples, embedding white supremacy into the fabric of all facets of Canadian society. It is with this lens that we developed this strategy to dismantle Islamophobia.



Watch the video To Yumnah,
With Love by Youth Coalition
Combating Islamophobia (YCCI).



Understanding Islamophobia: Setting the Context

On June 6, 2021, the London community experienced first hand the deadliness of Islamophobic violence when a self-described white nationalist committed mass murder, killing four members of Our London Family. In a precedent setting case, the judge ruled it to be “a textbook case of terrorist motive and intent.” Beyond the devastating, direct impact of wiping out four generations of one family, it left a community reeling, traumatized, and fearful for its safety.

The reality is that this attack was not an isolated incident. In fact, over the last seven years, more Muslims have been killed in targeted Islamophobic attacks in Canada than in any other G-7 country.¹

In order to fully comprehend the extent of Islamophobia and its manifestations, we must first define it.

Islamophobia is often defined simply as the fear of Islam, but its true meaning extends far beyond a mere fear. It is a term that encapsulates the fear and hatred of Islam, and the racism that is fueled by such sentiments. It is characterized by hatred, discrimination, and violence against Muslims and must be understood within the broader context of societal power and systems of oppression that perpetuate racism and marginalization.² In order to underscore and fully convey its systemic nature, the terms Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism will be used interchangeably throughout this strategy.

Much like anti-Indigenous racism and anti-Black racism, anti-Muslim racism is grounded in white supremacy and has interpersonal, institutional and systemic manifestations which intersect and reinforce one another. It targets Muslims, as well as those perceived to be Muslim based on their race, language, or ethnicity.

Those targeted are pushed to the margins, excluded, othered, and unsafe.

Furthermore, it is also essential to recognize that Islamophobia predates September 11, 2001, and that Islamophobic stereotypes that exist today are rooted in what Palestinian-American scholar Edward Said referred to as Orientalism³; that is, the West’s view of the ‘Oriental’ other, stereotyped as violent, irrational, and uncivilized. This view can be traced back to the Middle Ages and the Crusades, and has been cultivated throughout history to legitimize Western campaigns to dominate the Muslim world.

¹ NCCM Recommendations National Summit on Islamophobia, 2021

² Zine, 2022

³ Said, 1978

In the aftermath of September 11, anti-Muslim racism escalated significantly and was further perpetuated in systems and structures. The number of reported Islamophobic incidents surged dramatically once again after October 7 2023.⁴ As a result, Muslims continue to be stigmatized, dehumanized, and viewed as the other.

It is with this context that TVDSB developed the Dismantling Anti-Muslim Racism Strategy. By better understanding its origins, manifestations, and connections to colonialism and hate, we are better positioned to eliminate anti-Muslim racism in all its forms in Thames Valley.

Timelines

Although we recognize that much of the goals and objectives listed within this strategy are meant to be ongoing work, it is the intent that the strategy will be fully implemented by June 2027.

⁴ NCCM



Glossary of Terms⁵

Anti-Black Racism

Prejudice, attitudes, beliefs, stereotyping or discrimination that is directed at people of African descent and is rooted in their unique history and experience of enslavement and colonization. Anti-Black racism is deeply embedded in Canadian institutions, policies and practices, to the point that it becomes a part of our systems.⁶

Anti-Colonial Approach

A conceptual framework and practice that disrupts the persistent centering of white/Eurocentric ways of knowing within culture and ideology as normative and supreme.

Anti-Indigenous Racism

Anti-Indigenous racism is the ongoing race-based discrimination, negative stereotyping, and injustice experienced by Indigenous Peoples within Canada. It includes ideas and practices that establish, maintain, and perpetuate power imbalances, systemic barriers, and inequitable outcomes that stem from the legacy of colonial policies and practices in Canada.

Anti-Muslim Racism/Islamophobia

A term that encapsulates the fear and hatred of Islam, and the racism that is fueled by such sentiments. It is characterized by hatred, discrimination, and violence against Muslims and must be understood within the broader context of societal power and systems of oppression that perpetuate racism and marginalization.⁷

Much like anti-Indigenous racism and anti-Black racism, anti-Muslim racism is grounded in white supremacy and has interpersonal, institutional and systemic manifestations which intersect and reinforce one another. It targets Muslims, as well as those perceived to be Muslim based on their race, language, or ethnicity. Those targeted are pushed to the margins, excluded, othered, and unsafe.

Anti-Oppression

An active and consistent process of change to equalize power imbalances through the elimination of individual, institutional and systemic oppression and injustice.

Anti-Palestinian Racism

A form of anti-Arab racism that silences, excludes, erases, stereotypes, defames or dehumanizes Palestinians or their narratives.⁸

Anti-Racism

A process, a systematic method of analysis and a proactive course of action rooted in the recognition of the existence of racism, including systemic racism. Anti-racism actively seeks to identify, remove, prevent and mitigate racially inequitable outcomes and power imbalances between groups and change the structures that sustain inequities.

Antisemitism

Antisemitism is anti-Jewish prejudice, discrimination, hatred, hostility, violence, or oppression.⁹

Colonialism

The practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people by another.¹⁰

Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP)

An approach to teaching that intentionally nurtures the uniqueness of each student in background, language, family structure and social and cultural identity, integrating the student's background and identity into curriculum and teaching to create effective conditions for learning.¹¹

Cultural humility

A lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and self-critique. Cultural humility focusses on redressing power dynamics and imbalances while developing partnerships with communities and those advocating for change. It also requires continuous reflection and critique at the institutional level with considerations to race, ethnicity, culture, language, sexual orientation, and class.¹²

Culture

The customs, beliefs, behaviours and/or achievements of a particular time and/or people; beyond ethnicity, race and/or faith, encompassing broad notions of similarity and difference reflected in multiple social identities.

Culturally Safe Learning Environments

An environment in which students feel comfortable about expressing their ideas, opinions and needs and about responding authentically to topics that may be culturally sensitive.

Disaggregated Data

Data is broken down into component parts or smaller units of data for statistical analysis. In the context of race-based data, this means breaking down the composite (aggregate) "racialized" category into its component parts such as Black, South Asian, East/Southeast Asian, Latino, Middle Eastern, White, etc.

Discrimination

Unfair treatment through either imposing a burden on a particular person or group, or denying them a privilege, benefit or opportunity enjoyed by others, because of their race, citizenship, family status, disability, sex or other personal characteristics.

Equality

Where everyone is treated the same, without considering the diversity of needs.

Equity

A condition or state of fair, inclusive and respectful treatment of all people. A distinct process of recognizing differences within groups. Equity is different from equality and underscores the idea that fairness is different than sameness.

Gendered Islamophobia

A form of racism rooted in Orientalist tropes and other stereotypes associated with Islam. It dehumanizes Muslim women, portraying them as timid, weak, and oppressed, needing to be saved. Muslim men are portrayed as violent, barbaric, and patriarchal.

Human Rights

The fundamental, universal rights that all citizens of the world have agreed we are all entitled to. Human rights are intrinsic, meaning we are born with them, and they are the same for every person. They are captured by the 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which define in all aspects a life of equality, dignity, and respect and a life free from discrimination. Countries have human rights laws to make sure that people and governments are held accountable if rights are not respected. In Canada, human rights are protected by provincial, territorial, federal and international laws.

Intersectionality

A critical concept that recognizes the interconnected nature of various social identities and the complex ways in which they intersect to shape an individual's lived experience. Coined by the legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, this pivotal framework acknowledges that people can be affected by multiple dimensions of identity simultaneously, highlighting that oppression and marginalization are not isolated occurrences. It recognizes that an individual's experience is not solely determined by any single aspect of their identity but is influenced by the intersections of those identities.

Marginalized

Describing groups that become permanently confined to the fringes of society through a long-term, structural process of systemic discrimination ("marginalization") that creates a class of disadvantaged minorities. The marginalized status of groups is perpetuated through various dimensions of exclusion, particularly in the labour market, from full and meaningful participation in society.

Oppression

The use of power to disempower, marginalize, silence or otherwise subordinate one social group or category often further empowering and/or privileging the oppressor.

Racialized

The process through which groups come to be socially constructed as races, based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, language, economics, religion, culture, politics, etc.¹³

Restorative Practices

A set of strategies rooted in restorative justice that emphasize repairing the harm done to people and relationships through negative behavior or conduct, rather than punishment of the perpetrator(s). Use of restorative practices in classrooms and schools supports social-emotional learning by all parties, student mental health, belonging and inclusion and therefore helps to build supportive learning environments for all students.

Student Associations

Groups or networks of students within schools that bring together students who share a particular identity, e.g., Black Student Associations, Muslim Student Associations, Indigenous Student Associations. Association activities are student-led, with the support of a dedicated staff member.

Systemic Racism

The existence of institutions or systems that create or maintain racial inequity, often as a result of hidden institutional biases in policies, practices and procedures that privilege some groups and disadvantage others.

Trauma-Sensitive Practice/Approach

Sometimes referred to as Trauma-Informed Practice, an approach to creating welcoming, caring, respectful and safe schools that acknowledges the impact of prolonged stress created by neglect, abuse and other forms of trauma on students' well-being and their availability and capacity for learning. The approach focuses on creating learning environments that are calm, predictable and supportive, including through educator strategies that show empathy and healthy ways to handle emotions and relating to others.

Xenophobia

Fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners, or of anything that is strange or foreign.¹⁴ Xenophobia and white supremacy are interconnected and reinforce one another through systems of oppression.

White Supremacy

The normalization of whiteness as the default, perpetuating the idea that white people and their culture are superior to that of other races and ethnicities.

⁵ If no citation is provided, the definition represents a synthesis of multiple sources, tailored for the context of this document.

⁶ Government of Ontario, 2021

⁷ Zine, 2022

⁸ Anti-Palestinian Racism: Naming, Framing and Manifestations, 2022

⁹ Facing History and Ourselves

¹⁰ The Adaway Group

¹¹ Ontario Ministry of Education

¹² School Mental Health Ontario

¹³ Canadian Race Relations Foundation

¹⁴ Canadian Race Relations Foundation

Read Ontario's Education
Equity Action Plan.



Read Policy/Program
Memorandum 119 (PPM 119)
from the Ontario Ministry
of Education.



Learn more about the
Ontario Human Rights Code.



Setting the Context for Anti-Muslim Racism Initiatives in TVDSB

Indigenous Rights and Human Rights

TVDSB is committed to upholding the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Education Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It identifies targeted actions based on the criteria outlined in Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan (2017) and the Ontario Ministry of Education's Policy/Program Memorandum, Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools (PPM 119).

TVDSB recognizes the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples and the need to create and foster a culturally safe environment for Indigenous students and staff. Thames Valley District School Board recognizes the need for ongoing collaboration with the Indigenous Education Team and Indigenous communities, families and students.

TVDSB is also committed to upholding the Ontario Human Rights Code. All TVDSB schools, offices and locations should be spaces that are free of discrimination and actively work to affirm individuals' identities. Visit the Ontario Human Rights Commission's website for more information regarding the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Equity

Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (2009) provides a framework for building an inclusive education system. The strategy identifies ways to remove discriminatory biases, practices and barriers to learning and well-being that relate to ethnicity and race, faith, family structure and socio-economic status, as well as to sexual orientation, ability and mental health. Visit the Equity and Inclusive Education SharePoint page for more information regarding Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy.

Essential Conditions for Learning

The Essential Conditions for Learning framework focuses on well-being and mental health in a trauma-sensitive and culturally appropriate manner. The Essential Conditions for Learning center the values of safety, relationships, compassion and a strength-based approach in all learning environments. Visit the Safe Schools and Well-being SharePoint page for more information regarding the Essential Conditions for Learning.

Establishing caring and consistent relationships between students and staff forms the foundation upon which they can experience safety, connection, emotional regulation, and engagement in their learning. This is done by knowing the individuals involved, appreciating their lived experience (and potential trauma), responding to cues, and adjusting supports and interventions as needed. When tier-one strategies and practices are informed by and align with the Essential Conditions for Learning, we support overall mental health and well-being, allowing for students and staff to be available to learn. A culturally-safe learning and working environment requires staff and students to build relationships, understanding, and empathy so that they can navigate challenging topics.

Learn more about Ontario's
Equity and Inclusive Education
Strategy.



Learn more about the Essential
Conditions for Learning.



Read the Anti-Racism & Cultural Safety Resource Guide.



Learn more about Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy.



Anti-Racism, Cultural Safety and Cultural Humility

Applying anti-racism, cultural safety and cultural humility principles will require ongoing learning and self-reflection from staff. This includes examining their own lived/living experiences and positions and seeking information to learn more about the lived/living experiences and identities of the students and staff involved.

It is important to create a learning and working environment that is respectful and makes students and staff feel safe and comfortable, not only physically, socially and emotionally, but also in terms of their cultural heritage. A culturally safe learning environment is one in which students and staff feel comfortable expressing their ideas, opinions and needs and about responding authentically to topics that may be culturally sensitive. Read the Anti-Racism & Cultural Safety Resource Guide for more information regarding anti-racism, cultural safety and cultural humility.

Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP)

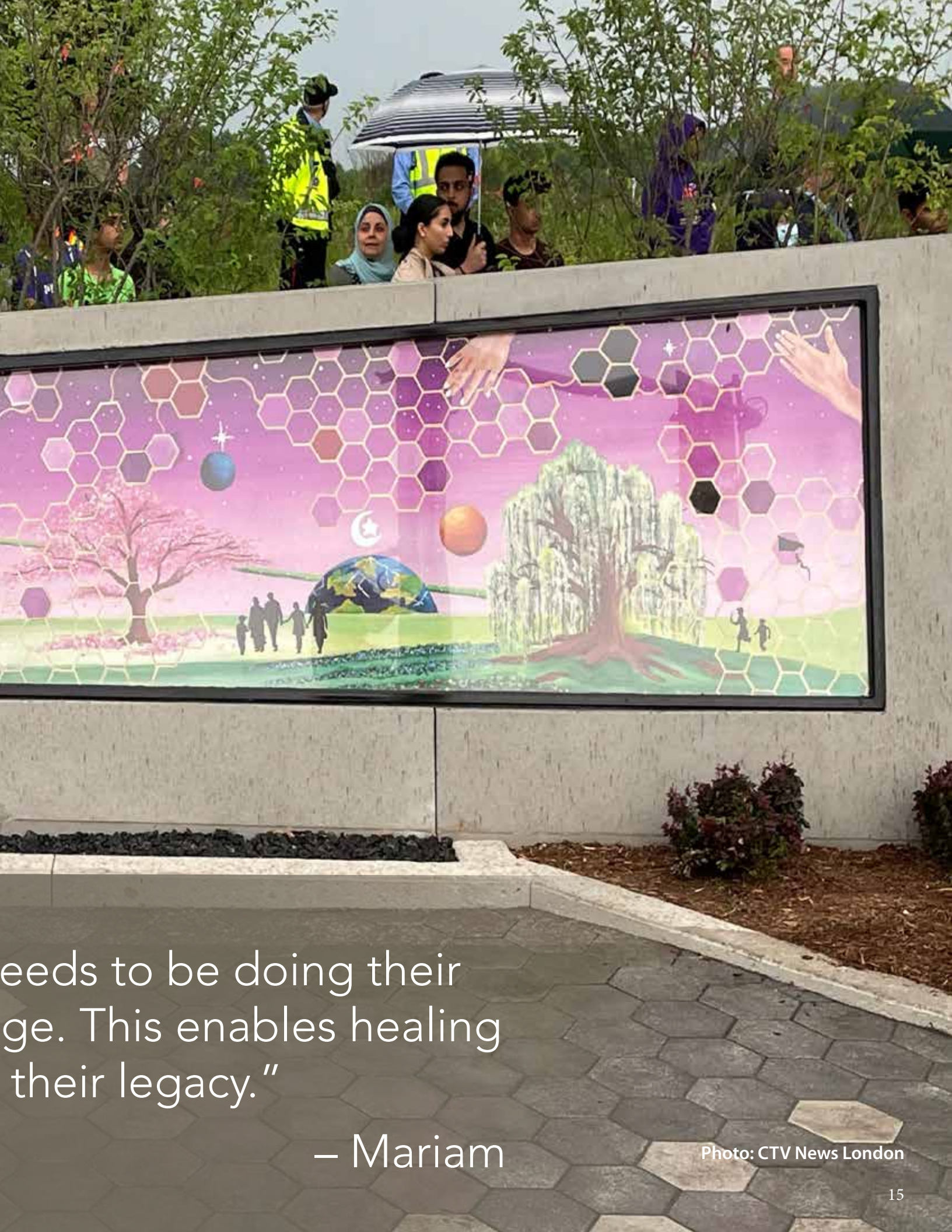
Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP) is an approach to teaching and learning that intentionally nurtures the uniqueness of each learner in background, language, family structure, and social and cultural identity, integrating the learner's background and identity into curriculum and teaching to create effective conditions for learning. CRRP has an institutional dimension, in the values demonstrated by administration and leadership in policy and procedure; a personal dimension, in the mindset of educators who are both self-aware and deeply knowledgeable of their students; and an instructional dimension, in the practices adopted by educators and staff in a culturally responsive classroom.¹⁵ Visit the Equity and Inclusive Education website for more information regarding Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy.

¹⁵ Capacity Building Series, Ministry of Education





"Every person from every background n
part in community building to create chan
and allows for the rebuilding of



needs to be doing their
ge. This enables healing
their legacy."

– Mariam

Photo: CTV News London

Watch Embers in the Forest:
Islamophobia.



Watch Timaj Garad's performance
at the Muslim Excellence Student
Leadership Conference.

The Importance of an Intersectional Approach in Dismantling Anti-Muslim Racism

TVDSB affirms the various intersecting identities of all students, staff, families and community members. Every individual has various social identities, abilities and lived/living experiences, and TVDSB is committed to affirming these intersectional identities in schools and workplaces.

Coined by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, intersectionality is a critical concept that recognizes the interconnected nature of various social identities and the complex ways in which they intersect to shape an individual's lived experience. This pivotal framework acknowledges that people can be affected by multiple dimensions of identity simultaneously, highlighting that oppression and marginalization are not isolated occurrences. It recognizes that an individual's experience is not solely determined by any single aspect of their identity but is influenced by the intersections of those identities. For example, the lived experience of a hijab-wearing, Black Muslim woman is shaped by the intersecting dynamics of Islamophobia, anti-Black racism, and misogyny.

Understanding intersectionality is essential when addressing Islamophobia. Much like any community, Muslim communities are not a monolith, but contain a range of backgrounds, identities and lived/living experiences, such as socioeconomic status, ability, race, sex, language, new-comer status, refugee status, and other identities protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code. Acknowledging and accounting for these identities provides for a more refined comprehension of the challenges and interconnected forms of oppression. It also allows for the amplification of historically marginalized voices. By adopting an intersectional lens, we ensure our strategies are inclusive, comprehensive and holistic, and are tailored to address the needs of diverse Muslim communities.

Timaj Garad is an Ethiopian-Harari Toronto-based multi-disciplinary storyteller, arts educator, and community organizer who uses poetry, theatre, and music to bring her stories to life. Her art is autobiographical, working at the intersections of a Black Muslim woman challenging injustice, unearthing truths, and healing.

Timaj was invited to deliver the keynote and performed a selection of her spoken word pieces at TVDSB's first annual Muslim Excellence Student Leadership Conference in November 2023.



Gendered Islamophobia

Gendered Islamophobia is a form of racism rooted in Orientalist tropes and other stereotypes associated with Islam. It dehumanizes Muslim women, portraying them as timid, weak, and oppressed, needing to be saved. Muslim men are portrayed as violent, barbaric, and patriarchal.

To fully understand gendered Islamophobia, we must consider historical and contemporary contexts.

Historically, gendered Islamophobia is rooted in the Orientalist trope that Muslim women are in need of liberation by the West. This view was actively promoted throughout history to legitimize Western campaigns of political, economic, and military domination of the Muslim world.

This stigmatization of Muslim women was further compounded by the events of September 11, 2001, and its aftermath. While the media often portrayed, and continues to portray, Muslim women as weak and oppressed, those who wear hijab became simultaneously seen as a binary; both victims and a potential threat. In effect, the hijab came to symbolize a religion feared by the West.

Following September 11, the narrative of “saving” Muslim women from their faith and cultural practices re-emerged, serving as a pretext for military interventions in Muslim-majority countries such as Afghanistan.

In the years since, Muslim men have endured intense scrutiny and surveillance, often depicted as terrorists, violent, barbaric, and abusive towards women.

Gendered Islamophobia has serious consequences, with hijabi women overwhelmingly as its primary targets. According to Statistics Canada, Muslim women are the most frequent victims of Islamophobic hate crimes in Canada.¹⁶ The Canadian Council of Muslim Women has labeled this intersection of religious, racial, and gender identities experienced by Muslim women as a “triple jeopardy.”¹⁷

Anti-Black Islamophobia

Anti-Black Islamophobia denotes the intersection of anti-Muslim racism and anti-Black racism, giving rise to complex lived/living experiences for Black Muslims. It is defined as racism enacted by non-Black Muslims and non-Muslims toward Black Muslims and individuals perceived to be Black and Muslim.¹⁸ This racism results in the erasure of the Black Muslim experience from the dominant narrative of the Muslim identity. This is despite the fact that Black Muslims were the first Muslims to arrive in Canada, and can trace their history back to the 1700s.¹⁹

As a result of their intersecting identities, Black Muslims experience compounded dehumanization and marginalization.

When confronting anti-Black Islamophobia, it is vital to acknowledge the diversity of Black Muslim communities – a diversity of perspectives, experiences, and cultures.

Anti-Palestinian Racism

Anti-Palestinian racism is a distinct form of racism faced by Palestinians and those who support the Palestinian cause. Anti-Palestinian Racism is a form of anti-Arab racism that silences, excludes, erases, stereotypes, defames or dehumanizes Palestinians or their narratives. Anti-Palestinian racism takes various forms including: justifying violence against Palestinians; failing to acknowledge Palestinians as an Indigenous people as articulated by the United Nations²⁰, as having a collective identity, belonging and rights under international human rights law; erasing the human rights and equal dignity and worth of Palestinians; excluding or pressuring others to exclude Palestinian perspectives, Palestinians and their allies; defaming Palestinians and their allies with slander that seeks to misrepresent Palestinians as threatening, violent or opposed to democratic values.²¹

Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian racism are closely linked, with an escalation in one often fueling an escalation in the other, and vice versa. As a result, the two are generally conflated. While intersections exist between the two, this conflation is problematic because it ignores the fact that not all Palestinians are Muslim, and in effect erases the identity and experiences of the Christian Palestinian community and other non-Muslim Palestinians. It is also problematic because it mistakenly categorizes the Palestinian struggle as a religious-based struggle, rather than a struggle involving Palestinian human rights, which serves to perpetuate harmful stereotypes against both Muslims and the Islamic faith.

Yet due to the misguided assumption that all Palestinians are Muslims, in addition to the intersecting identities of Palestinian Muslims, Palestinians will face both Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian racism. It is important to note that despite the shared aspects between the two, efforts aimed at dismantling Islamophobia fall short in tackling the fundamental issues underlying anti-Palestinian racism. Addressing anti-Palestinian racism necessitates a separate and distinct response.

Xenophobia

Xenophobia refers to the fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners, or of anything that is strange or foreign.²² Xenophobia and white supremacy are interconnected and reinforce one another through systems of oppression. Islamophobia intersects with xenophobia, as Muslims are viewed as both the religious and racial “other,” leading to their stigmatization, marginalization and exclusion.

¹⁶ Statistics Canada, 2018

¹⁷ Hamdani, 2005

¹⁸ Jackson-Best, 2019

¹⁹ The Canadian Encyclopedia

²⁰ United Nations

²¹ Anti-Palestinian Racism: Naming, Framing and Manifestations, 2022

²² Canadian Race Relations Foundation

Affirming Identities

Goal One:

Represent, assert, and support intersectional identities of Muslim students, staff, and families in school, classroom, and district-level learning opportunities, initiatives, and events.



Read TVDSB's Equity Action Plan.

TVDSB Dismantling Anti-Muslim Racism Framework

The TVDSB Dismantling Anti-Muslim Racism Framework is built around the five goals of TVDSB's Equity Action Plan, facilitating a cohesive approach to anti-hate throughout the system. The five goals are the following: Affirming Identities, Staff Capacity, Connectedness, Representation, and Securing Accountability. Each of these goals contains specific objectives, tasks, key indicators, and success criteria. They do not operate in isolation, but instead are interconnected and reinforce one another to provide a comprehensive strategy.

The Dismantling Anti-Muslim Racism Framework was developed in collaboration with members of the Muslim community and extensive consultation with students, staff, families, and community members.

Objective 1

To better reflect the identities, abilities, and lived / living experiences of Muslim students, staff, and families.

Tasks:

- Identify and remove Islamophobic teaching resources from classrooms throughout the TVDSB system, as part of TVDSB's implementation of the "TVDSB Decision Making Tool for Resource Selection".
- Develop, in consultation with the Muslim community, and provide to educators culturally relevant and responsive teaching resources to ensure the inclusion and integration of the diverse and intersectional experiences of Muslim students.
- Develop staff cultural humility by offering anti-racist professional learning and embed and account for Religious and Creed-Based Days of Celebration and Observance in staff teaching and assessment planning.
- Develop staff capacity to be trauma sensitive and to recognize student, staff, and families' lived / living experiences related to anti-Muslim racism and the impact of global events on student and staff well-being.

Key Indicators:

- Student and community voice and feedback, such as the School Climate Survey and other student, family, and community voice opportunities.
- Feedback from professional learning.
- The access of TVDSB tools, toolkits, and resources, such as the Islamic History Month Resource Guide, Ramadan Resource Guide, Countering Islamophobia School Resource Guide, and June 6 Commemoration Resource Guide.

What this will tell us:

- The extent to which Muslim students, staff, and families believe that their identity is affirmed and represented in their learning, work, and other experiences in TVDSB.
- How often professional learning resources on culturally relevant and responsive instruction and assessment are accessed by teachers and staff.
- What additional resources, materials, and learning opportunities are required to better represent and affirm Muslim student identities, lived/living experiences, and diverse identities in TVDSB.

Objective 2

To create physical and social environments that affirm the intersectional identities of Muslim students, staff, and families.

Tasks:

- Ensure accommodations are available, accessible, and clearly communicated to Muslim students, staff, and families, such as dedicated spaces for prayer and reflection, availability of halal food, accommodations around student dress, athletic uniforms, quiet spaces during Ramadan, etc.
- Promote identity affirming and cultural competence information and guidance documents for use by administrators, educators, and staff, such as the Islamic History Month Resource Guide, Ramadan Resource Guide, Countering Islamophobia School Resource Guide, and June 6 Commemoration Resource Guide.
- Ensure culturally relevant and responsive mental health supports are available to meet the needs of Muslim students.

Key Indicators:

- The percentage of schools, work locations, and buildings with a dedicated prayer space, accompanied by clear and appropriate signage.
- The percentage of schools, work locations, and buildings with halal and other dietary inclusive food options.
- The access of identity affirming and cultural competence information and guidance documents by administrators, educators, and staff.
- Student voice data from the School Climate Survey, student networks, and Muslim student conferences.

What this will tell us:

- The feelings of safety, inclusion, and identity affirmation experienced by Muslim students and staff.
- The additional priority areas to be addressed through the development of information and guidance documents.
- The next steps required to create safe physical and social environments that affirm Muslim students' and staff's multiple and intersectional identities.

Objective 3

To provide identity affirming opportunities for Muslim students and staff to see themselves represented in school and board wide initiatives.

Tasks:

- Support Muslim Student Associations (MSAs), and other student affinity groups with the necessary resources for them to thrive and affirm the intersectional identities of Muslim students.
- Offer student leadership conference opportunities for Muslim students to connect, celebrate, and uplift, including the Muslim Student Leadership Conference.
- Support the Muslim Staff Affinity Group.
- Provide ongoing opportunities for Muslim students and staff to connect with Muslim community faith leaders.

Key Indicators:

- The percentage of schools with active MSAs.
- Muslim student participation in associations, conferences, and advisory committees
- Muslim student voice feedback from associations, conferences, and committee participants.
- Participation and feedback by staff in the Muslim affinity group.

What this will tell us:

- The extent to which opportunities are being provided for Muslim students and staff across the District to connect and share their experience.
- What is going well for Muslim students/staff, as well as how Muslim students/staff can be further supported.

Staff Capacity

Goal Two:

Build staff capacity to apply anti-racist, anti-Islamophobic and equitable practices to remove disproportionalities and disparities for Muslim students, staff, and families.

Objective 1

To build staff capacity to recognize Islamophobia, understand its impact, and dismantle it.

Tasks:

- Offer professional development, in collaboration with Muslim individuals, to all staff on recognizing Islamophobia, understanding its impact, and dismantling it by positioning Islamophobia within an anti-colonial, anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and anti-white-supremacist framework.
- Offer professional development opportunities related to the Thames Valley Guidelines on the Non-Use of Racial and Other Slurs and Epithets, with a specific focus on addressing Islamophobic comments.
- Offer professional development on how to celebrate, uplift, and provide opportunities of joy for Muslim students, staff, and families.
- Offer professional development related to navigating difficult conversations about Islamophobia, racism, and trauma from a decolonized perspective.

Key Indicators:

- The number of professional learning opportunities related to recognizing Islamophobia, understanding its impact, and dismantling it, all within an anti-colonial anti-racist, anti-oppressive, trauma sensitive, and anti-white-supremacist framework.
- The number of professional learning opportunities accessed.
- Professional learning feedback forms.

What this will tell us:

- Levels of engagement in professional learning opportunities that support the effective implementation of strategies related to recognizing Islamophobia, understanding its impact, and dismantling it, all within an anti-colonial anti-racist, anti-oppressive, trauma sensitive, and anti-white-supremacist framework.
- Opportunities to further support staff related to the implementation of learning related to recognizing Islamophobia, understanding its impact, and dismantling it, all within an anti-colonial anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and anti-white-supremacist framework.

Objective 2

To empower staff to understand and eliminate gaps related to Muslim student experience.

Tasks:

- Identify and eliminate disparities in Muslim student and staff outcomes and experiences.
- Provide professional learning related to culturally responsive approaches for affirming identity, and supporting religious / creed-based accommodations.

Key Indicators:

- Muslim student outcomes and experiences using Everyone Belongs and Student Climate Survey data.
- Feedback from Muslim staff associated with the Muslim Staff Affinity Group.

What this will tell us:

- The degree to which staff understand effective strategies designed to redress Muslim student and staff disparities.
- How data is being utilized to address disproportionate outcomes for Muslim students and staff.
- Muslim student and staff outcomes and experiences.



Connectedness

Goal Three:

Build purposeful and collaborative relationships with Muslim students, staff, families, and community partners that promote equity and create communities of belonging for Muslim students, staff, and families.

Objective 1

To provide opportunities for staff to build relationships and engage collaboratively with diverse Muslim communities.

Tasks:

- Provide community engagement sessions with Muslim organizations and communities to develop the trust necessary for meaningful collaboration.
- Translate TVDSB resources to facilitate family engagement and navigation of the school system as partners in education outcomes for students.
- Seek input from Muslim organizations and communities on issues that impact Muslim students, staff, and families.

Key Indicators:

- Number of engagements and collaborations with Muslim individuals and organizations[
- Feedback from various individuals, leaders, and organizations within Muslim communities.
- Feedback on engagement tools, toolkits and resources related to cultural humility, restorative approaches, and the Essential Conditions of Learning.

What this will tell us:

- Opportunities for further learning and sharing through engagement and collaboration with Muslim individuals and organizations.
- Successful strategies for building relationships and collaborating with Muslim students and families.

Objective 2

To provide opportunities for Muslim students and staff to connect and share their lived / living experiences.

Tasks:

- Provide collaboration and support opportunities for Muslim students and staff such as Muslim Student Associations and the Muslim Staff Affinity Group.
- Intentionally seek input from Muslim communities on issues that impact Muslim students, staff, and families.

Key Indicators:

- The number of meetings held by the Muslim Staff Affinity Group and feedback from participants.
- The frequency of Muslim Student Leadership Conferences.
- The percentage of schools with an active Muslim Student Association.

What this will tell us:

- Opportunities for further collaboration and engagement.
- Strategies for supporting Muslim students, staff, and families.



Representation

Goal Four:

Cultivate and foster a TVDSB workforce and leadership that is reflective of the diversity of Muslim students across the Thames Valley District School Board and the broader community.

Objective 1

To better reflect the diversity of the Muslim community within the TVDSB workforce and leadership, such as administrators, educators, and clinical staff.

Tasks:

- Collect voluntary staff identity-based data to assess the degree to which the TVDSB workforce and leadership reflects the diversity of the Muslim community.
- Implement equitable recruitment and hiring practices to increase the representation of the diversity of the Muslim community within the TVDSB workforce and leadership.
- The usage of assessment guidelines, scoring rubrics, and other documentation to support transparent decision-making in the hiring process.

Key Indicators:

- Number of Muslim staff hired and retained from the voluntary Everyone Belongs Staff Survey.
- Number of recruitment activities for individuals from within the Muslim community.
- Number of participants in bias-aware training.

What this will tell us:

- Representation of self-identified Muslim students and staff.
- Number of community connections to support recruitment of Muslim hires.
- Access of tools and strategies to acknowledge and examine personal and institutional bias.



Securing Accountability

Goal Five:

Prioritize human rights, anti-oppression, anti-Islamophobia, and equity in all structures, policies, practices, and decision-making, including the implementation of this strategy.

Objective 1

Develop clear and effective complaints mechanism.

Tasks:

- Review current complaints mechanisms, including who families should contact, how complaints are escalated, and how retaliation (reprisal) is prevented, and then implement a corrective action plan based on findings.
- Review the current anonymous reporting mechanism from an anti-racist, trauma sensitive, and decolonized approach, and implement a corrective action plan based on findings.
- Develop accessibility strategies (such as translation of documents) related to the complaints process when addressing Islamophobic incidents.
- Establish clear channels of communication so that there is clarity and transparency in terms of process and actions taken.

Key Indicators:

- Results from the review of the current complaints mechanism.
- Results from the review of the anonymous reporting mechanism.
- Number of accessible and translated resources developed.
- Feedback from students, families, and staff regarding the communication and complaints process.

What this will tell us:

- Perception of the communication and complaints process, and the anonymous reporting mechanism.
- Opportunities for further refinement of complaints process and anonymous reporting mechanism.

Objective 2

Develop and implement supports and professional learning related to human rights, anti-oppression, anti-Islamophobia, and equity.

Tasks:

- Create an advisory group, made up of Muslim students, staff, parents / caregivers, and community members, that will oversee the implementation of the strategy.
- Provide regular professional learning to all employees regarding human rights legislation.
- Provide regular professional learning to school staff regarding bias aware, progressive discipline.

Key Indicators:

- Feedback on the implementation of the strategy by the advisory group.
- The number of professional learning opportunities related to human rights legislation.
- The participation of staff in professional learning opportunities related to bias aware progressive discipline.

What this will tell us:

- Opportunities for further work to implement the strategy.
- Opportunities for further professional learning that support the implementation of strategies related to progressive discipline and human rights legislation.





Thames Valley
District School Board

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