Racial Equity / Cultural Proficiency

FRAMEWORK

NOVA SCOTIA

Racial Equity / Cultural Proficiency Framework

Preface

Definitions

The Racial Equity / Cultural Proficiency Framework draws upon the inclusive approach of Cultural Proficiency. Cultural Proficiency is defined as "an approach which offers both educators and their students knowledge and understanding of how to interact effectively with people in their environments who differ from them" (*The Culturally Proficient School: An Implementation Guide for School Leaders*, Lindsey et al., 2008). Cultural Proficiency is an approach that builds from Cultural Competence. Cultural Competence is defined as "a set of congruent behaviours, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enables that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations" (Terry Cross in *Cultural Proficiency Inquiry: A Lens for Identifying and Examining Educational Gaps*, Lindsey et al., 2005).

Acknowledgements

Racial Equity Policy Consultation Advisory Committee
The Department of Education acknowledges the contribution of the Racial Equity Policy Consultation Advisory Committee for their stewardship of the consultation process.

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Background

In November 2007, based on recommendations from the Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Rights Coordinators' Committee and with the subsequent endorsement of school board directors, six of the seven English school boards in Nova Scotia engaged in a research initiative, the Achievement Gap Initiative (AGI)/Tripod Project, spearheaded by the AGI/Tripod Project Steering Committee. The research work included re-development of student and teacher surveys, logistical organization at school board and department levels, assistance with distribution of surveys to schools, support for training in analysis of data, and communication throughout the school communities. The surveys were administered to 66 sample schools in November 2009. The reports generated from the survey findings were shared with the department and school boards during the months of February, March, and April 2010. A training session, led by two representatives from the AGI/Tripod Project, on how to interpret the data, and effective ways to share the data, was held in February 2010. Follow-up sessions led by school board staff were held throughout the province.

Based on a joint agreement between the school boards and Department of Education, a consultation process was begun to get feedback from school boards about the Racial Equity Policy and how the policy intersects with the AGI/Tripod Project. The Racial Equity Policy/AGI Advisory Committee supported the consultation process and development of a report based on the findings from the consultation meetings.

The resulting report, *Racial Equity Policy: A Research Informed Approach*, highlighted a number of recommendations—one of which was to establish the Provincial Racial Equity Policy (PREP) Leadership Team. All recommendations were accepted, and the PREP Leadership Team was established in June 2010.

The PREP Leadership Team prepared the following framework to guide implementation of all components of the Racial Equity Policy and promote leadership in the area of Cultural Proficiency.

Racial Equity / Cultural Proficiency Framework

RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSE/ACTION
1 a. Establish a Provincial Racial Equity Policy Leadership Team. It will have a three-year mandate during which it would coordinate/ deliver/lead policy implementation.	• Provide training for the Provincial Racial Equity Policy (PREP) Leadership Team. • Develop department-wide plans for professional development for curriculum developers, directors, consultants, and evaluation staff.
1 b. Collaborate with appropriate school board and staff personnel to integrate the research findings of the Achievement Gap Initiative (AGI) into priority initiatives, such as school improvement planning, Health Promoting Schools, Professional Learning Communities, Positive Effective Behaviour Supports, SchoolsPlus.	• Develop and share with school boards some specific strategies that align existing priorities. • Ensure that the findings from the AGI be inserted into the Public Schools Program and Professional Learning Communities. • Advance a collective school board level approach based on individual board priority workplans. Make sure that equity is a part of this workplan. • Build a sharing network on AGI work among the boards. • Boards must deliver or integrate research findings into curriculum/evaluation areas. • Explore whether there is an opportunity to administer the AGI surveys in school boards that were not able to participate previously (conseil scolaire acadien provincial and Halifax Regional School Board).

RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSE/ACTION
1 c. Work with divisions within the department's Public Schools Branch to draw upon the findings of the Achievement Gap Initiative (AGI) when supporting programming and services for students.	• Ensure a collaborative approach that demonstrates integration of Racial Equity Policy and AGI findings as a measurable component of all initiatives and projects. • Under the direction of the Senior Executive Director of the Public Schools Branch, facilitate a meeting with Public Schools Branch staff to share findings and discuss integration and alignment with Public Schools Branch work. • Follow up with school boards on progress of integrating research findings from AGI. • Provide school boards with a framework to assist them in the utilization of the AGI findings. • The Department of Education will engage in research on successful students, exploring what contributed to their success; the role of resilience; the impact of an inspiring adult(s); and the role of adult/teacher expectations. • Maintain a focus on adult/teacher expectations and the role of setting higher expectations. • Provide support to boards with the AGI analysis of provincial, board, and school data. • Initiate incentive/innovation grants focused on student improvement and success. • Provide sessions to analyze the AGI data and examine how the findings impact school boards and schools. Explore the question: What will be different for students once the findings are fully addressed? • Provide professional development to support the application of the data for senior staff at the department and school boards and with elected school board members.

RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSE/ACTION
2. Establish dedicated funding, as resources are made available, to support implementation of the Racial Equity Policy within the department and school boards.	• Maintain on a go-forward basis the Racial Equity Policy (REP) annual grant. • Advocate for an increase in the REP grant as identified by school board use and needs. • Advocate for an increase in school board funding allocated for Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Rights (RCH).
3. The PREP Leadership Team will work with the Senior Executive Director of the Public Schools Branch and Department of Education Communications to develop a communications package for use by the department and school boards, as appropriate.	• Develop a press release to announce the Racial Equity / Cultural Proficiency Framework and the PREP Leadership Team. • Develop a Racial Equity Education Program with certificates over three-year time blocks. • Communicate and work with school boards on their Communication Strategy as it relates to REP/RCH policy implementation.
4. Support the three school boards that participated in the pilot Student Self-identification Survey in their strategic planning to address the findings of student self-identification data analysis, based on unique school board findings and specific policy focus in each of those school boards.	• Develop a template to track the ongoing status of the three boards with regard to the impact on programming and services for learners, especially African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaw learners. • Link with technology sharing networks (i.e., school board and department websites). • Share and discuss *Identity, Equity and Performance: Mathematics and Reading Literacy in Nova Scotia Public Schools* (Victor Thiessen 2009) and the Public Schools Branch response with school board and department staff. • Monitor implementation of the Student Information System (SIS) data transfer process to ensure information is transferred and accurate.

RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSE/ACTION
5. Based on Racial Equity Policy implementation plans and the Department of Education mandate, expand Student Self-identification Survey data collection, as resources allow, to include the English school boards and the conseil scolaire acadien provincial with the understanding that student self-identification will become a component of the Student Information System (SIS).	• Develop and provide Frequently Asked Questions to school boards to clarify the purpose and process of self-identification. • Develop and implement a communications plan regarding use of race-based analysis findings for pilot boards. • Involve education partners in the response to the data findings. • Develop and implement a communications plan regarding race-based analysis findings for non-pilot boards and the department. • Develop a code of ethics to guide the collection of information and application of data findings.
6. Provide professional development for school board and Department of Education staff to support effective utilization of elements and components of cultural competency/proficiency in the delivery of programs and services. There will be an initial focus on literacy and numeracy.	• Develop an accountability framework to measure the impact of cultural proficiency training in the delivery of programs and services, curriculum, and professional development. • Continue and expand culturally proficient professional development for educators in a variety of settings.
7. Develop, in collaboration with appropriate school board staff, a professional development work plan for teachers and school-based administrators. This plan would incorporate the *Identity, Equity and Performance: Mathematics and Reading Literacy in Nova Scotia Public Schools* findings and the Racial Equity Policy Innovation Configuration Map (for senior high school) components (2, 3, 4, 6, and 7) which were part of the implementation of the Racial Equity Policy.	• Develop and implement a Racial Equity Policy refresher in-service for school boards.

RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSE/ACTION
8. Revitalize the Department of Education's Racial Equity Policy (REP) Advisory Committee, under the chair of the Senior Executive Director of the Public Schools Branch, with the intent of implementing a Racial Equity Policy Action Plan. The REP Advisory Committee was established in 2002; including Department of Education senior management, the Director of African Canadian Services, and the Director of the Mi'kmaq Liaison Office.	• Develop a professional development plan for department staff regarding the Racial Equity Policy and cultural proficiency. • Review and revise, as appropriate, the Department of Education's Racial Equity Policy Action Plan.

Conclusion

The Racial Equity / Cultural Proficiency Framework affirms the Department of Education as a leader in the work of policies and practices related to racial equity and cultural proficiency. This framework will guide the collaborative work of the department and our partner school boards. The Provincial Racial Equity Policy (PREP) Leadership Team serves as the operational structure to lead the implementation of the framework.

A Racial Equity / Cultural Proficiency Work Plan is being finalized. This work-plan will serve as the implementation road map and provide concrete strategies and actions to advance the framework. The PREP Leadership Team has set for themselves an aggressive timeline and will be reporting on the progress of their work and implementation of the framework on an annual basis to the identified partners in this work.