



Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy:

Creating anti-racist and Black-affirming learning and working environments

PART 2: THE STRATEGY

March 8, 2021





The **AYA** or fern is an African Adinkra symbol of endurance and resourcefulness.

It is used in the logo for YRDSB's Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy to symbolize the many adversities and difficulties the Black community has endured and the Board's commitment to working with the community over the longterm to overcome the obstacles to implementing this strategy.



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There have been incidents of anti-Black racism within our schools and workplaces. Through scholarly reports identified in the background of this strategy, we know that biases about abilities and interests have in some instances affected students' pathways. Staff members tell us they have been at times overlooked for hiring opportunities and promotions, and have been made to feel unwelcome in the workplace. Relationships with the Black community were strained. On behalf of the York Region District School Board, I sincerely apologize for instances where anti-Black racism has occurred.

We must address and work to eliminate instances of unfair outcomes for Black students and staff members. Outcomes should not be predicted by skin colour. All students, families and staff members entering our doors should always know they are important and valued members of our school communities and will be treated with care and respect. The Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy is our guide to accomplish the priorities and actions found within its pages.

Close to two years ago, the Senior Leadership Team consulted with leaders in the Black community and created a space for them to work with us towards disrupting and dismantling anti-Black racism in York Region District School Board (YRDSB) schools and workplaces. And so, a community-focused Anti-Black Racism Steering Committee was formed. Since then, Black community leaders, students and parent representatives have met regularly with YRDSB staff and generously given their knowledge and time.

During these meetings, members of the Anti-Black Racism Steering Committee shared experiences of anti-Black racism in our schools and workplaces against students, staff and families. Through these conversations, they also shared their wisdom and underscored the need for YRDSB to address incidents of anti-Black racism head on. It was their relentless commitment to ensure Black students receive an equitable education and their desire to dismantle anti-Black racism and unwavering advocacy that paved the way for this authentic collaboration and the development of a shared commitment to work with community members and the Ministry of Education toward dismantling anti-Black racism. Even though these conversations were sometimes difficult, our collective commitment to the important work of dismantling anti-Black racism never wavered. Each meeting highlighted the importance of centering our decisions on the best interests of students, on the importance of community voice and involvement, on the need to listen, and on having the courage to directly address anti-Black racism on an individual and structural level.

I am extremely grateful to all members of the Anti-Black Racism Steering Committee for their dedication and commitment. Without community leaders, students and families working with staff, we would not have arrived at this point. I am honoured to have worked with these leaders and will be ever thankful for their insight, honesty and bravery. We hope they will continue to challenge, inspire and support us as we implement the strategy.

I am committed to leading the implementation of this strategy and to strengthening equitable and affirming schooling experiences that result in positive outcomes for Black students, families and staff. I look forward to continued meetings with the Anti-Black Racism Steering Committee as we develop our implementation plan and provide updates based on our accountability framework to highlight the milestones we have reached and the next steps we will take.

A strategy runs the risk of being only words on paper. The YRDSB's Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy is a tool to guide our work and make tangible our commitments. It represents our unwavering commitment to our Steering Committee, to Black students, to Black families, and to Black staff. It is an assurance to the YRDSB community to fulfill our goal of addressing unfair outcomes and strengthening inclusive and affirming learning and working environments for students and staff.

Our goals cannot be achieved with the involvement of just a few. All members of the YRDSB school community must feel the urgency and responsibility of the actions within the strategy's pages. Each of us needs to challenge stereotypes and biases which can impede or cause inequitable outcomes for our Black students and staff. Dismantling anti-Black racism is my focus.

Families trust us with the care of what is most important and precious to them - their children. Our students trust us to make them feel safe and welcome, to show them kindness and to help them develop the skills they need to achieve their dreams. Our staff members trust us to provide an inclusive environment that enables them to be successful in their work. We must continue to work every day to be deserving of that trust and provide environments that inspire confidence and enable our students to thrive. It is why we work in public education - because we believe in the potential of all of our students to learn, grow and achieve.

I will continue to prioritize the strategy in our collective work. We will work tirelessly to identify and dismantle systemic barriers where they exist, and through our collective actions, building one upon the other, create lasting, impactful and transformative change.

I believe that this strategy marks a collective commitment to action. Together, YRDSB will continue to create and enhance positive, culturally affirming and supportive conditions in our schools and workplaces for Black students and staff to thrive and succeed.



Louise Sirisko, Director of Education
York Region District School Board



1. FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

The following principles define the general framework that guided the development of this strategy. These principles are grounded in the decades of research as documented in Part 1: Background Report which accompanies this strategy:¹

1. Black children experience an educational system that limits their ability to learn. As such, the gap in achievement does not reflect innate ability, but instead reflects systemic anti-Black racism within the education system.
2. Black students have a right to access the same education promised to all Ontario students.
3. Black students have a right to learning environments that not only protect them from anti-Black racism and other forms of oppression, but also affirm their identities, foster their strengths, and contribute to their overall well-being.
4. While teachers are primarily responsible for student learning in schools, Black parents and other members of the Black community are key partners in their children's education.
5. Anti-Black racism is a systemic problem in the education system and throughout society, and harm can be perpetuated by even the most well-meaning and competent staff.
6. This strategy will be implemented with urgency, recognizing what the research makes clear, that generations of Black students in Ontario have experienced anti-Black racism in education. While change is hard and takes time, it is more likely to be embraced by staff when it is treated as a priority and a sense of urgency is felt at all levels of the Board.
7. Accountability for and commitment to the implementation of this strategy must be visible throughout the organization and clearly articulated and demonstrated by senior leaders.

¹ See also:

James, C., & Turner, T. (2017). *Towards race equity in education: The schooling of Black students in the GTA*. Toronto, ON: York University.

Henry, N. (2019, May). Anti-Black racism in Ontario schools: A historical perspective. *Research & Policy Brief. Issue No. 1*. Retrieved from https://www.turnerconsultinggroup.ca/uploads/2/9/5/6/29562979/policy_brief_-_no_1_may_2019.pdf

Dei, G. (1995). Drop Out or Push Out? The dynamics of Black students' disengagement from school. Department of Sociology in Education. Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Maynard, R. (2017, November 29). Canadian education is steeped in anti-Black racism. *The Walrus*. Retrieved from <https://thewalrus.ca/canadian-education-is-steeped-in-anti-black-racism/>.

Maynard, R. (2017). *Policing Black lives: State violence in Canada from slavery to the present*. Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing.

8. In order to change outcomes for Black students, the ideology that sustains anti-Black racism needs to change, not simply the behaviours of individuals.
9. The Board will act with courage, sustained focus, and endurance to embrace innovation, knowing that traditional school practices may work for some but not all children.
10. Understanding that not all initiatives in this strategy may have the desired impact, the Board will adopt a learning mindset when implementing this strategy. Outcomes will be assessed as the strategy is being implemented, and the needed adjustments will be made to ensure that the initiatives are having the intended impact.
11. Success will be measured not by the completion of actions but by the change made to the well-being and academic achievement of Black students and the representation and well-being of Black staff.



2. PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

PRIORITY 1: COMMIT TO BOLD LEADERSHIP



Courage is an inner resolution to go forward despite obstacles; cowardice is submissive surrender to circumstances. Courage breeds creativity; cowardice represses fear and is mastered by it. Cowardice asks the question, is it safe? Expediency asks the question, is it politic? Vanity asks the question, is it popular? But conscience asks the question, is it right? And there comes a time when we must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but one must take it because it is right.

Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



While all employees can influence organizational change, it is the responsibility of the Director of Education and Superintendents to set the direction, specify organizational expectations, and allocate resources. If racial disproportionalities and disparities are to be identified and addressed, then senior leaders will need to effect change within the organization by boldly leading conversations on anti-Black racism, spearheading anti-racism organizational change efforts, fostering learning and working environments that affirm the intersecting identities of Black students and staff, and addressing issues that arise with the goal of eliminating disproportionalities and disparities.

Actions:

- 1.1** Senior leaders will ensure that the organization states and embeds its commitment to equity and addressing anti-Black racism in its strategic plan, other organizational strategies, and performance expectations.
- 1.2** Senior leaders will receive regular updates on racial disproportionalities and disparities, incidents of anti-Black racism in schools, and the changing staff and student population to inform their work, Board strategies, and community engagement.
- 1.3** Senior leaders will strive to ensure that the YRDSB's stated commitment to equity and dismantling anti-Black racism is reflected throughout the day-to-day work of the organization.
- 1.4** Senior leaders will support staff based in schools or in Board offices to apply an equity/anti-Black racism lens to work undertaken by the organization so that efforts to reduce racial disproportionalities and disparities are not seen as an optional add-on but rather are treated as integral to the organization's mandate.

PRIORITY 2: INCREASE THE RACIAL LITERACY OF ALL STAFF



If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.

Desmond Tutu



The YRDSB recognizes that when people do not understand the structures of power (e.g., white supremacy, colonialism, patriarchy, capitalism, heteronormativity) that shape the lives of Black students and communities, they are led to believe that racial inequality is the result of students' shortcomings, a view that reinforces and perpetuates anti-Black racism. The Board also recognizes its role in ensuring that all staff commit to taking an active role in acknowledging, discussing, dismantling, and disrupting racist acts, ideologies, and practices in the organization. The Board recognizes that silence and inaction not only deny the lived realities of Black students, families, and staff, but also create experiences that can be unsafe and retraumatizing.

As such, the racial literacy of all staff will be increased. Racial literacy includes understanding that race is a socially constructed concept — not a biological reality — that was set up to control people on the basis of their skin colour. Racial literacy means understanding that racism is more than a collection of individual acts of prejudice; racism is systemic and embedded within the education system as well as in broader society. Racial literacy involves understanding the intersections of power and race, being able to locate and analyze racial systems, possessing the grammar and vocabularies associated with racial discourse, such as white supremacy, anti-Blackness, racialization, racial identity, and intersectionality, while learning how to differentiate terms such as ethnicity, nationality, discrimination, prejudice, and stereotyping.² Racial literacy includes the ability to “read, recast, and resolve” racially stressful situations.³

² King, L. J. (2016). Teaching Black history as a racial literacy project. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*, 19(6), 1303–1318.

³ Stevenson, H. C. (2014). *Promoting racial literacy in schools: Differences that make a difference*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Actions:

- 2.1** The YRDSB will develop and deliver mandatory professional development for senior leaders specific to their roles and responsibilities in order to develop their racial literacy along with the knowledge and competence to support the implementation of this strategy.
- 2.2** The YRDSB will develop and deliver mandatory professional development and ongoing learning for all school administrators, educators, and staff to develop their racial literacy along with the knowledge and competence to support the implementation of this strategy.
- 2.3** The YRDSB will make racial literacy and a demonstrated commitment to creating Black-affirming spaces and dismantling anti-Black racism and intersecting oppressions key competencies when hiring educators and staff as appropriate, as well as when promoting vice principals, principals, and superintendents.
- 2.4** The YRDSB will leverage the Board's position as the third largest school board in Canada to advocate for university faculties of education to embed anti-racism training into their curriculums, develop the racial literacy of new teachers, and increase new teachers' ability to create Black-affirming learning environments.

PRIORITY 3: CREATE BLACK-AFFIRMING LEARNING AND WORKING ENVIRONMENTS



It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken [adults].

Frederick Douglass



By fostering belonging and dismantling oppressive systems that maintain marginalization, the creation of Black-affirming learning and working environments will enable Black students and staff to flourish. In such environments, staff are intentional about including Black history and narratives, showcasing Black excellence (past and present) while reflecting the full cultural diversity and intersecting identities within the Black community. This also requires all staff to be able to competently and confidently interrupt and address acts of interpersonal anti-Black racism when they do occur, and advocate for changes to harmful school policies and practices.

Actions:

- 3.1 The YRDSB will strengthen its anti-racism protocol to address incidents of anti-Black racism, and ensure it provides clear guidance on which acts are deemed inappropriate and the steps students, parents, and staff can take to have them addressed. This protocol will also identify the steps that educators, school administrators, and staff must take when they witness an incident or one is brought to their attention. This protocol will identify anti-Black racism as a violation of the Ontario *Human Rights Code* and the Ontario *Health and Safety Act*, as appropriate, and identify the duty to act for those in positions of responsibility. Existing policies and procedures will be reviewed and enhanced to ensure they adequately meet the objectives of creating learning and working environments free from anti-Black racism, harassment and discrimination.
- 3.2 The YRDSB will ensure that a robust guide is developed for staff on how to consistently and immediately interrupt and address acts of anti-Black racism that they witness or have been made aware of. It will also educate staff about

their legal obligations to create learning and working environments free from anti-Black racism, harassment, and discrimination per the Ontario *Human Rights Code* and the Ontario *Health and Safety Act*.

- 3.3** The YRDSB will provide the tools and resources for creating Black-affirming and anti-racist learning and working environments, and will hold school administrators responsible for doing so.

- 3.4** The YRDSB will inform all staff of their responsibilities to uphold the Ontario *Human Rights Code* and the Ontario *Health and Safety Act*, where applicable, and create anti-racist working and learning environments, and will hold staff responsible when they do not appropriately address acts of racism.

- 3.5** The YRDSB will support students to develop school-based campaigns that help to dismantle anti-Black racism and create anti-racist school environments.

- 3.6** The YRDSB will advocate to and partner with supportive community agencies and municipal partners to bring awareness to and address anti-Black racism within the broader York Region community.

PRIORITY 4: IMPROVE ACADEMIC OUTCOMES FOR AND THE WELL-BEING OF BLACK STUDENTS



**When a flower doesn't bloom,
you fix the environment in
which it grows, not the flower.**

Alexander Den Heijer



Black students may be underperforming because they experience barriers to services and have long been underserved by the education system.⁴ As such, the YRDSB will strive to remove barriers, close opportunity gaps, and address unwelcoming and racist school environments that undermine Black students' mental health, push them out of mainstream learning environments, and undermine their academic achievement. Addressing these issues includes reviewing the policies, protocols, practices, and processes that may support disproportionalities and disparities in discipline, streaming, identification of special needs, engagement with policies, as well as over-reporting to the child welfare system.

Actions:

- 4.1** The YRDSB will review suspension and expulsion data, when available, to identify any racial disproportionalities. If needed, an intervention program for Black students at risk of, or who have been, suspended or expelled will be created to address any underlying issues, including teacher bias, the need for support services, etc., with the aim of keeping Black students in mainstream learning environments and reducing the number of school days lost to suspensions.

⁴ See Report 1: Background Report which accompanies this strategy. See also the following:
James, C., & Turner, T. (2017). Towards race equity in education: The schooling of Black students in the GTA. Toronto, ON: York University.
Henry, N. (2019, May). Anti-Black racism in Ontario schools: A historical perspective. *Research & Policy Brief. Issue No. 1*. Retrieved from https://www.turnerconsultinggroup.ca/uploads/2/9/5/6/29562979/policy_brief_-_no_1_may_2019.pdf.

- 4.2** The YRDSB will review Every Student Counts Survey data, when available, to identify any disproportionalities in programs of study and exceptionalities. If needed, the YRDSB will develop programs to interrupt streaming and the over-identification of Black students as having learning disabilities or special needs, which begins as early as kindergarten.
- 4.3** The YRDSB will provide Black students with culturally appropriate mental health supports and ongoing opportunities to gather and heal.
- 4.4** The YRDSB will seek to work with the York Region Children’s Aid Society to analyze referral data to identify any issues of over-reporting to child protection agencies. The YRDSB will also educate staff about the impact of oppression, unconscious bias, and racism on reports to Children’s Aid and ensure that duty to report training is provided through an anti-racist lens.
- 4.5** The YRDSB will support Black students to remain engaged in school participation and will assess for factors that may be contributing to the disengagement of Black students from school, leading to attendance concerns or early school leaving.
- 4.6** The YRDSB will review the role of police in schools as well as the protocol with the York Regional Police to assess the impact on the well-being and learning environments of Black students.
- 4.7** The YRDSB will create programs that encourage and empower Black students to aim for high academic achievement and that provide identity-affirming spaces that allow them to maintain a strong and positive sense of self rooted in their racial identity. These programs and spaces may include Black Student Alliances, Black student conferences, summer camps for underserved and underperforming Grade 8 students, reading interventions for Grade 3 students, partnerships with universities, and so on.

PRIORITY 5: CREATE A CULTURALLY RELEVANT AND BLACK-AFFIRMING CURRICULUM

“

Every child deserves an education that guarantees the safety to learn in the comfort of one’s own skin.

Dena Simmons

”

The YRDSB recognizes that when students are not taught about the structures of power (e.g., white supremacy, colonialism, patriarchy, capitalism, heteronormativity) that shape the lives of Black students and communities, students may believe that racial inequality is the result of students’ shortcomings, a view that reinforces and perpetuates anti-Black racism. As such, the Board recognizes that an important element of this strategy will be increasing the racial literacy of students to enable them to identify, disrupt, and dismantle anti-Black racism within their learning environments and communities.

The YRDSB also recognizes the need to embed a culturally relevant curriculum and pedagogy to create identity-affirming learning spaces that recognize the diverse and intersecting identities of Black students, and honour the ways of knowing and being of people of African descent. A culturally relevant curriculum and pedagogy will not only allow Black students to flourish, but will also enable non-Black students to see people of African descent positively reflected throughout the curriculum.

Actions:

- 5.1** The YRDSB will embed the histories of people of African descent, as well as past and present-day contributions of Black people, more fully into K–12 curriculum.
- 5.2** YRDSB students will be taught about racism as a structural and historical phenomenon as well as an interpersonal one.

- 5.3** The YRDSB will provide the professional development and ongoing learning, resources, and supports to educators to enable them to become more comfortable and confident in delivering a Black-affirming and anti-racist curriculum.
- 5.4** The YRDSB will make mandatory the celebration of Black History Month in an identity-affirming way.
- 5.5** The YRDSB will collaborate with other school boards to create a compendium to the Ontario Curriculum that highlights the teaching of Black history and the Black experience throughout K–12 curriculum.

PRIORITY 6: IMPROVE THE WAYS IN WHICH BLACK PARENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES ARE ABLE TO ENGAGE WITH SCHOOLS AND THE SCHOOL BOARD



**It takes a village
to raise a child.**

African Proverb



The YRDSB wants Black parents and community members to feel welcome within all YRDSB schools and to have the information they need to adequately support the learning of Black students.

Research indicates that Black parents and communities have been harmed and traumatized by systemic racism and overt acts of anti-Black racism experienced within schools.⁵ The Board will pave the road to healing and correcting these wrongs in YRDSB by repairing these relationships, building trust, and engaging as partners with Black parents and communities.

Actions:

- 6.1** The YRDSB will inform Black parents and communities about its recognition and understanding of how systemic racism is manifested in public education, the actions being taken by YRDSB to address it, and how families may engage in this effort.

⁵ See Report 1: Background Report which accompanies this strategy. See also the following:
James, C., & Turner, T. (2017). *Towards race equity in education: The schooling of Black students in the GTA*. Toronto, ON: York University.
Henry, N. (2019, May). Anti-Black racism in Ontario schools: A historical perspective. *Research & Policy Brief. Issue No. 1*. Retrieved from https://www.turnerconsultinggroup.ca/uploads/2/9/5/6/29562979/policy_brief_-_no_1_may_2019.pdf.
Sylvestre, D. F. (2018). Black Parental Engagement and Schooling. https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/89522/3/Sylvestre_Desiree_F_201806_MA_thesis.pdf

- 6.2** The YRDSB will support Black parents to learn about the resources available to them to support them in partnering in their child's education.
- 6.3** The YRDSB will inform Black parents about who to contact when they have issues, the process for addressing issues, and how they will be informed of the outcome.
- 6.4** The YRDSB will develop mechanisms to communicate directly with Black parents.

PRIORITY 7: HIRE AND SUPPORT BLACK STAFF

“

The daily battles won, the thousand territories gained... the things you refused to compromise along the way, laid the blueprint for [Black students] to follow.

So now, let [they] who [have] watered, be watered. Let [they] who [have] given, be given to.

Chadwick Boseman

”

The YRDSB recognizes that where there are few Black staff in its schools and departments, an isolating experience is created, particularly when they have to navigate racist and unwelcoming work spaces. The Board also recognizes that all students benefit from seeing teachers and staff from all backgrounds in various roles within the school community.

Black students also benefit from having Black staff in their schools to offer support and advocate for them.

Black students who see Black teachers may regard teaching as a profession open to them, thereby increasing the supply of Black teachers. In addition, when non-Black students and members of the community see Black people as teachers and staff and in other positions of authority and responsibility, it helps to challenge stereotypes and disrupt anti-Black racism.

As such, the Board commits to hiring more Black staff while at the same time creating working environments that are identity-affirming, inclusive, and anti-racist.

Actions:

- 7.1** The YRDSB will prioritize the hiring of Black teachers and other Black staff.
- 7.2** The YRDSB will foster inclusive, Black-affirming, anti-racist working environments.

- 7.3** The YRDSB will provide Black teachers and staff with mental health supports and ongoing opportunities to gather, share, and heal.
- 7.4** The YRDSB will advocate that its Employee Assistance Program employs and/or makes referrals to Black therapists and resources able to provide culturally responsive supports to Black staff.
- 7.5** The YRDSB will leverage the Board's position as the third largest school board in Canada to advocate for university faculties of education to admit more Black students in order to graduate more Black teachers.



3. ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

The successful implementation of this strategy depends to a great extent on effective and clearly defined accountability. Accountability will create a sense of urgency in the organization as well as foster transparency and enable the public to hold the YRDSB accountable for not only implementing the strategy, but also improving outcomes for Black students and staff. Accountability for implementing this strategy will also help to create a lasting climate of commitment to anti-racism and improving the outcomes for Black students and staff.

This accountability framework includes both internal and external mechanisms. Within the organization, the Director of Education and Board of Trustees have key responsibilities for oversight, allocating resources, and monitoring implementation. The community is an important external mechanism that will play a critical role in the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of this strategy.

It is easy to place far more attention on the implementation of equity actions than on the outcomes they achieve. This framework is therefore designed for implementing the actions in the strategy in a way that will create better outcomes for Black students and staff. The framework includes an evaluation that allows senior leaders and community members to assess the impact of the strategy on outcomes for Black students and staff; effectively monitor and make course corrections as needed; and identify gaps and emerging opportunities. This framework also establishes the use of key performance indicators to measure progress as well as regular public reporting to allow for community input beyond what will be provided through the Anti-Black Racism Steering Committee.

Table 1 lays out the main components of the accountability framework. These are described in greater detail on the following pages.

TABLE 1. ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK FOR DISMANTLING ANTI-BLACK RACISM STRATEGY

Level of Accountability	Component	Reporting Frequency	Mechanism
System	Anti-Black Racism Steering Committee	Quarterly	Quarterly updates on strategy implementation
	Trustees	Quarterly	Updates on strategy implementation
	Public Reporting	Annually	Written annual report on strategy implementation and KPIs
	Director's Action Plan	Annually	Written update to the Board of Trustees
	Strategy Evaluation	In 5 years	Process and impact evaluation
School / Department	School Improvement Plans / Department Improvement Plans	Annually	Written report on strategy implementation and measures of progress
Individual	Director's Position Profile Superintendent and Principal Position Profiles Teacher Performance Appraisals Teacher Annual Learning Plans	As determined by cycle	Strategy implementation

SYSTEM LEVEL

Anti-Black Racism Steering Committee

The Anti-Black Racism Steering Committee will continue to play an active leadership role in supporting the implementation and evaluation of the Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy. The steering committee will continue to meet regularly and receive updates and information from YRDSB staff regarding implementation of the strategy.

Trustees

The Director of Education will update the Board of Trustees on the progress of implementation of the strategy and the resulting outcomes for Black students and staff. These updates will be provided quarterly so that trustees can stay informed of the Board's progress toward achieving its goals, keep their constituents informed, and recommend adjustments to be made to the implementation plan as needed.

As a point of access to the school board for members of the public, trustees are encouraged to share information with Black communities in York Region about the strategy and its implementation. Ongoing communication between trustees and the community will also help build public trust in education and help the Board to develop stronger relationships with the Black communities they serve.

Receiving regular updates about the implementation of the strategy will also allow trustees to better understand and think about systemic anti-Black racism and support them to intentionally connect this strategy to other work at the Board.

Public Reporting

Ensuring transparency and a public dimension to accountability is an important aspect of this strategy. Black communities in York Region have been highly engaged in the development of the Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy and want to be kept informed of its implementation. This accountability also provides the opportunity to continue building partnerships and shared ownership with the community. Reporting to the public on the implementation of the strategy also gives the Board the opportunity for additional outreach to, and engagement of, York Region's diverse Black communities.

On an annual basis, the YRDSB will prepare a written report documenting the implementation of the strategy to date and the resulting outcomes for Black students and staff. On an annual basis the Director of Education will also convene a meeting with the Black community to present this report as well as gather feedback and concerns.

Evaluation

A formal third-party process and impact evaluation will be conducted and the resulting outcomes for Black students and staff assessed. This evaluation will have the objectives of:

- Assessing the extent to which the strategy is being implemented as intended
- Assessing whether the intended outcomes are being achieved and whether there are any unintended outcomes
- Conducting a cost-effectiveness analysis to determine the benefits achieved for the investment, and
- Identifying challenges, opportunities, and lessons learned.

The evaluation will be embedded in the implementation of the strategy and will build in structures to solicit constant feedback on its implementation. This process will allow the evaluator to identify any issues — for example, if something is not working or something has taken the strategy off course — and allow the Board to immediately perform a course correction rather than waiting until the end of the 5-year strategy to have the issues identified and adjustments to implementation made. Annual updates from the evaluator can also be included in the annual public reporting.

SCHOOL LEVEL

School Improvement Plans

One of the primary ways in which local schools can be held accountable for ensuring the implementation of this strategy is by reporting on how the actions in this strategy will be implemented in their School Improvement Plans. While Board-level data is helpful to identify system-wide issues and needed interventions, data at the school level is more practical, as it allows for school-level interventions and improvement of educational practices that will reduce and eventually eliminate achievement gaps.

Schools will be required to complete a self-assessment of various measures of anti-Black racism/Black-affirming spaces and will submit a plan of action to address the identified issues. The plan of action will be integrated into their School Improvement Plans. These plans will be reviewed to identify the system-wide supports needed as well as opportunities for schools to collaborate.

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

Director's Action Plan

The Director's Action Plan (DAP) sets out goals that align with the strategic plan and the Board's mission, vision, and values. The DAP focuses on raising the achievement of students who are underserved and underperforming. The Director of Education's responsibility for implementing this strategy will be included in the DAP, through which the trustees will hold the Director accountable.

Position profiles

The implementation of the Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy will be given high priority in the position profiles of superintendents, school administrators, corporate managers, and professional staff. The Director of Education will hold superintendents accountable through their performance agreements and evaluations, and they in turn will hold corporate managers and school administrators accountable.

Teacher Performance Appraisal

The Teacher Performance Appraisal (TPA) System⁶ is designed to provide teachers with meaningful appraisals that foster teacher development and identify opportunities for learning and support. The TPA has two components: one for new teachers and the other for experienced teachers.

Annual Learning Plans

The teacher's Annual Learning Plan (ALP)⁷ is the vehicle used to support their professional learning and growth. The ALP is teacher-authored and directed, and developed in a consultative and collaborative manner with the principal. Teachers will be encouraged to include actions to support their ongoing learning about anti-Black racism in order to create anti-racist learning and working environments.

⁶ <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/appraise.html>

⁷ <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/samplealpsec.pdf>

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

In addition to any information about the implementation of particular actions, several key performance indicators (KPI) will be developed and used to assess the progress that has been made. Assessments of progress and the impact on Black students will form the basis for assessing the success of the implementation of the Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy.

Reporting on this data at both the system and school levels will identify where system-level and school-specific initiatives are needed. It will provide school leaders with a clear, accurate, and useful understanding of the degree of inequity present in their own schools. It will also allow the YRDSB to target its resources for maximum impact.

The use of these key performance indicators will:

- a) Provide clear expectations for Black student achievement
- b) Focus school board attention on opportunity gaps
- c) Provide accountability data for use by the community
- d) Assess the impact of the initiatives contained in this strategy, and
- e) Identify whether and where adjustments to this strategy are needed.

KPIs will be developed as part of the YRDSB's implementation plan and may include:

- Graduation rate
- 5-year outcomes (e.g., acceptance to an Ontario university or college, did not apply to post-secondary education, returning to high school, etc.)
- Representation in each program of study
- Representation in special education programs
- Representation among suspensions and expulsions
- Student well-being
- Representation of Black staff among new hires, and
- Staff well-being.

The specific KPIs will be developed by the Board and included in the implementation plan.