



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

ANNUAL REPORT

(September 1, 2017 to August 31, 2018)

W. Anthony Anirud, Human Rights Commissioner
York Region District School Board

Introduction

With the establishment of an arms-length office at the commencement of the fall 2017 school year, authorized to address matters specific to the *Human Rights Code* (“the *Code*”) and related issues, this is the first Annual Report for the York Region District School Board (“the YRDSB” or “the Board”). The report provides a summary of all relevant activities within the jurisdiction of the Human Rights Commissioner’s Office (“the HRCO”) during its first reporting period from September 1, 2017 to August 31, 2018.

Background

The appointment of a Human Rights Commissioner was the result, in part, by a [Report](#) submitted to Ontario’s former Minister of Education detailing the need to have greater accountability and transparency in addressing matters pertaining to discrimination and harassment, as well as advancing policies and fostering practices based on equity and inclusion at the YRDSB. In response to the Report, the Minister of Education provided a list of 22 [directions](#) to YRDSB on April 11, 2017. Direction 6 addressed the following:

That the Board establish a robust Human Rights Office properly staffed and resourced, that is responsible for human rights compliance, and processes and procedures to receive and respond to/investigate complaints of harassment and discrimination reported by staff, students and parents. The Human Rights Office will, on a permanent basis, report directly to the Director of Education.

Further

- a. The office staff must include a director who has demonstrated expertise in human rights law and practice, with responsibility for developing and overseeing a new human rights and workplace harassment complaints policy and procedure.
- b. The office will take the lead in developing and implementing the board's employment equity strategies.
- c. The office will review staffing in French immersion schools.
- d. The office will report their data regarding complaints made to their office and progress on the employment equity plan to support the Board's equity related advisory committees.

- e. The office will take the lead on board compliance with the provisions of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* and mandatory training for staff on the AODA and for institutional responsibilities arising from the Ontario government's strategies to end sexual violence and harassment.
- f. The office will undertake an audit of the board's compliance with the AODA and provide mandatory training for all staff on AODA.
- g. The Board must immediately establish a process for receiving and investigating complaints of racism or any other prohibited ground(s) of discrimination that reassures the Minister of Education that it addresses the concerns identified in the Report.

Anthony Anirud was hired as YRDSB's first Human Rights Commissioner at the commencement of the 2017-18 school year.

HRCO Mandate

The mandate of the HRCO is to lead the YRDSB community in fostering an inclusive and respectful learning and working environment in compliance with the *Code* and [Policy and Procedure #240; Human Rights Code-Related Harassment and Discrimination](#) ("Policy #240") for its students, staff, trustees and other Board community members.

The HRCO is also entrusted with the accessibility portfolio for ensuring compliance with the AODA, the anti-harassment sections of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1990* ("the OHSA"). The general mandate of the HRCO is to:

- 1) Assist members of the YRDSB community through its confidential consultations process for addressing complaints of harassment, discrimination, harassment, sexual violence and failure to accommodate matters with the goal of bringing greater understanding to the range of options available for responding to and resolving complaints.
- 2) Provide information, guidance and training to the YRDSB community to increase awareness about the importance of embedding human rights in alignment with the [mission, vision and values](#) of the YRDSB.

- 3) Provide timely advice and training to the staff to increase awareness of issues specific to compliance with the *Code* and the *AODA*.

During the 2017-18 reporting period, the HRCO's focus was to build awareness and inform the YRDSB community of its arms-length nature as well as staff the office. The following were the key areas of focus:

1) Addressing violations of the *Code*:

- Receiving complaints and providing confidential consultation services to any member of the YRDSB community, in order to explore options for resolution of conflicts that may have arisen due to discrimination and harassment.
- Advising and consulting on all matters falling strictly within identified prohibited grounds of the *Code*.
- Managing all aspects pertaining to consultations, early resolutions investigations, file reviews and timelines pursuant to process under Policy and Procedure #240.

2) Advisory Consultations and Early Resolutions:

- Being available to individual members of the YRDSB community regarding issues and concerns that pertain to discrimination and harassment.
- Conducting preliminary assessments, informal interest-based mediations and individual coaching, with the consent of disputants with the objective of creating respectful dialogue and exploring mutually beneficial solutions.
- Assisting in conflict resolution options, upon the request of the Director of Education to review systems issues that adversely impact the YRDSB's commitment to fostering a working and learning environment free of discrimination and harassment and in compliance with the *Code*.

3) Educational Initiative/Training:

- Acting as an educational resource to the entire YRDSB in providing ongoing training on Policy and Procedure #240 and the *Code*.
- Developing and implementing educational initiatives aimed towards ensuring members of the greater YRDSB community were aware of:
 - ◆ the types of behaviours which constitute discrimination and harassment;
 - ◆ how racism, heterosexism, homophobia, sexism, ageism and other expressions of prejudice can manifest in the YRDSB community and culture;
 - ◆ the procedures for filing a complaint; and
 - ◆ ways of maintaining and promoting an environment free of discrimination and harassment.

4) Referrals for Mediation (Informal Resolution)

- Mediating of staff conflict, at the request and consent of the parties in dispute on matters related to Code-based discrimination and harassment.
- Mediating student complaints, at the request of the Superintendent and with the student's/parent's consent.

5) Employment Equity:

- Collaborating with Coordinating Superintendent of Education (Equity and Community Services) and the Associate Director of Education (Learning and Working Environments) in regard to YRDSB's commitment to establishing equal opportunities for employment in its recruitment, hiring and retention of under-represented groups.

Arms-length Role

The arms-length nature of the HRCO is critical to ensuring that members of the YRDSB community are assured of a fair process, which can act on addressing issues without interference or influence from any other department or unit at the Board. The office can be accessed by either first-instance or at last-resort, but it operates independently with governing principles of:

1. Confidentiality - All dealings with the Office are deemed confidential. Confidentiality is important to ensure that members of the YRDSB community can discuss concerns without fear of repercussions and this is protected to the full extent of the law. At the discretion of the Human Rights Commissioner, exceptions to confidentiality may occur to address imminent risk of serious harm. Consent from a party to a matter is always required before another a matter is discussed with any other Board unit. All HRCO staff are required to sign a departmental confidentiality agreement.
2. Impartiality & Independence - While the, Human Rights Commissioner reports to the Director of Education, the role is independent from the formal administrative structure and all other departments. This ensures that any matters brought to the attention of the Human Rights Commissioner are dealt with in an impartial and confidential manner.
3. Conduct of HRCO Staff - The manner in which HRCO interact with other Board units is critical to maintaining public trust. Staff are mindful of engaging only professional interactions with limited social engagements, which could be seen to compromise the independence of the office.

During the reporting period, the HRCO was situated in a physical location independent of other departments at the Dr. Bette Stephenson Centre for Learning while the permanent office location was being built. The Board proceeded with a significant financial investment for a proposed plan of relocating the HRCO slated for the start of the 2018-19 school year.

HRCO Budget

During the reporting period, the Board was forthcoming in providing the budgetary resources for establishing a robust office. The budget allocation for the first year of its operation was \$361,000.00. However, the entire amount was not used because the entire staffing of the office was not completed by the end of the reporting period. At the end of the reporting period, the HRCO has the following staff:

1. Human Rights Commissioner (start date: August 27, 2017)
2. HRCO Administrative Assistant (start date: October 30, 2017)
3. Investigations Officer, Human Rights (start date: June 11, 2018)

The HRCO also assumed the small AODA training budget (\$10,000) shortly after the transfer of the AODA portfolio in January 2018.

HRCO Logo

A logo was designed for the HRCO for its website and letterhead. The primary colour of the YRDSB logo was used which makes clear its association with the YRDSB. However, it also signifies the unique and arm's-length role of the HRCO. The logo was designed in February 2018 with the assistance of the Communications Office. The HRCO logo was officially introduced in June 2018. At all times, the logo is to be featured with the YRDSB logo, with the former having a prominent position so that it is clear that while the HRCO operates at arms-length, it remains a unit that is internal to the Board, and thus, subject to responsibilities and liabilities associated with the Board. The HRCO logo was not officially launched during the reporting year as it was scheduled to be introduced in the subsequent report year at the launch of the HRCO website.

HRCO Case Management

The primary mandate is to receive individual concerns/ complaints specifically pertaining to discrimination or harassment (including sexual harassment) brought forward by a member of the YRDSB community. Such matters may be brought forward at first instance or by way of a referral. First instance refers to situations in which no other unit at the YRDSB has address the matter and the HRCO is the first point in which assistance is requested. A matter that comes by way of a referral means that the issues has been first review at some other point within the YRDSB (e.g., Superintendent, Union, Human Resources etc.) and, with consent of the

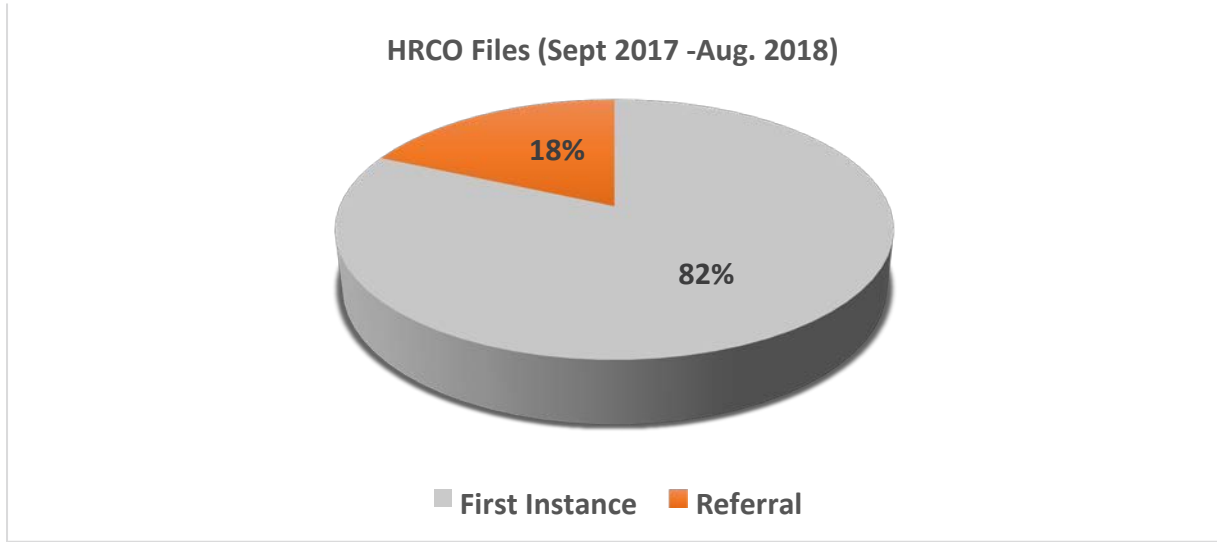
complainant, the matter is referred to the HRCO because it falls within the purview of the OHRC. Matters reported to or a requested to be dealt with at the HRCO usually fall in to the following two (2) categories:

- complaint matter requiring a consultation and assessment to determine jurisdiction and whether or not it should be addressed under Policy #240; and
- advisory matter requiring guidance on addressing a general concern or question about a human rights matter.

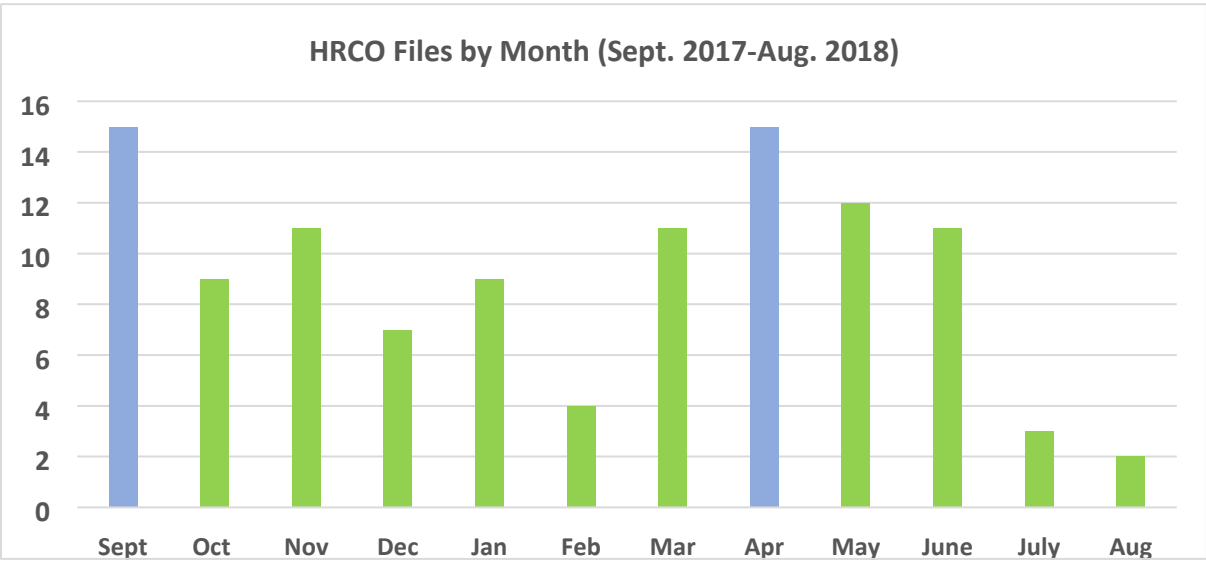
In both categories, a matter can be received any member of the YRDSB community.

Month	HRCO Files	First Instance	Referral	Advisory	Code	Non-Code	Other	Informal Process	Formal Process
Sept	15	11	4	17	7	5	3	12	1
Oct	9	8	1	13	4	3	2	7	0
Nov	11	10	1	15	7	2	2	9	0
Dec	7	4	3	8	6	1	0	7	0
Jan	9	6	1	16	7	2	0	9	0
Feb	4	1	0	12	5	0	0	5	0
Mar	11	10	1	19	9	2	0	11	0
Apr	15	11	4	21	11	4	0	15	0
May	12	9	3	15	8	4	0	12	0
June	11	10	1	14	8	3	0	10	*1
July	3	3	0	7	3	0	0	3	0
Aug	2	2	0	5	1	1	0	2	0
TOTAL	109	85	19	162	76	27	7	102	2

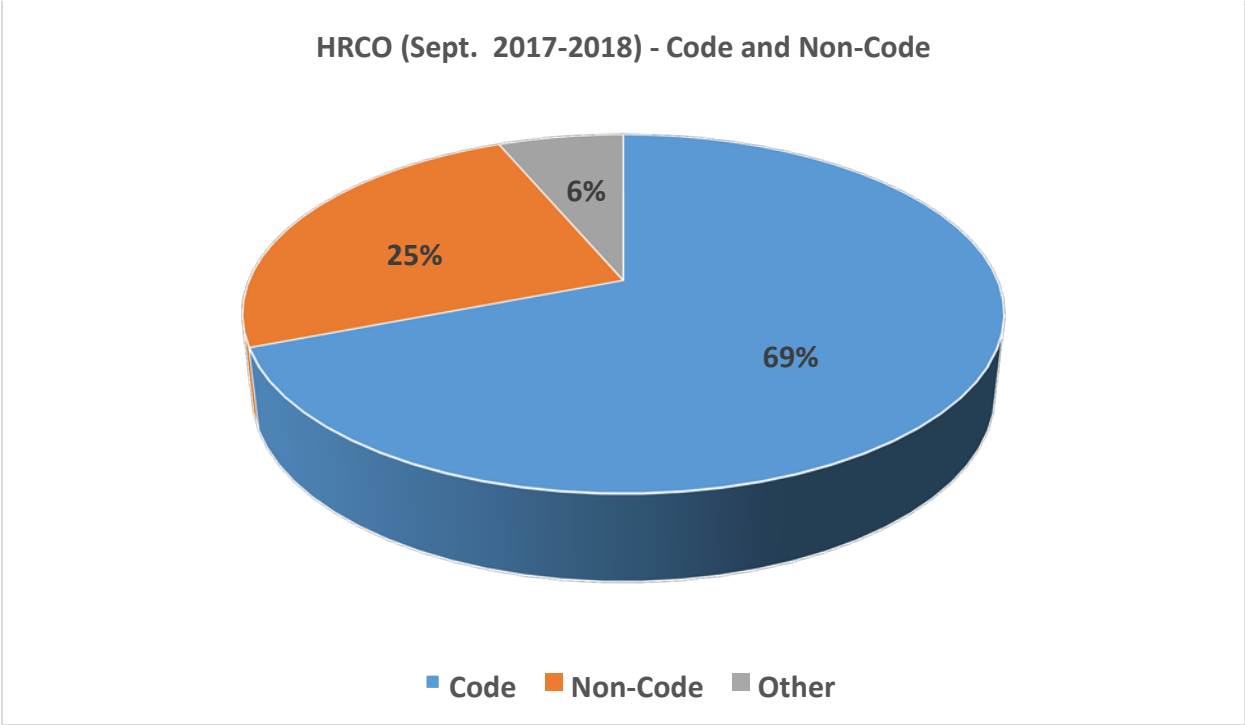
During the reporting period, the vast majority of HRCO files 85 out of 109 (82%) came to the HRCO at first instance instead of referral compared to 19 (18%) by referral which suggests that was either a preference or a deliberate decision made to not have a matter addressed elsewhere within the YRDSB.



In terms of monthly intake, the highest number of consultations/complaints took place in the months of September and April with fifteen (15) each. The months of July, August and December were when which the least number of consultations/complaints were received. Thus, when the least number of consultations/complaints mirrored the months where schools were closed or staff were on vacation.

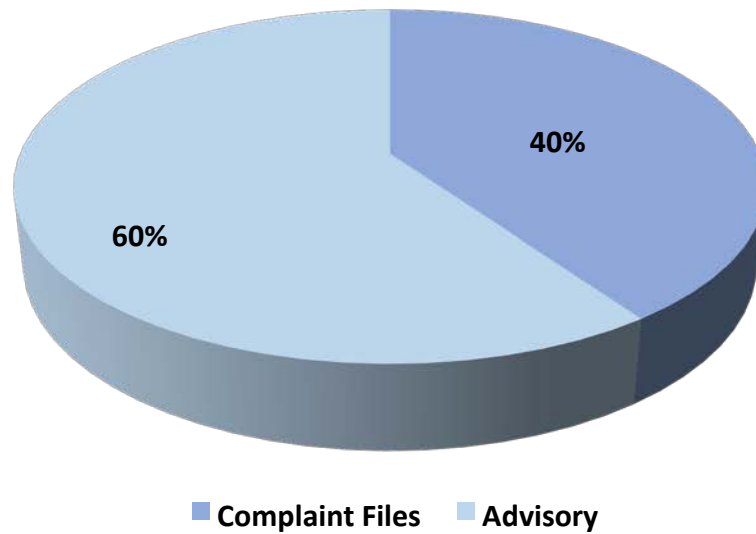


The vast majority (69%) of the 109 HRCO case files during the reporting period were determined to be *Code*-based. In other words, the matters pertained to or were deemed connected to one or more of the seventeen prohibited *Code* grounds. Approximately a quarter (25%) were determined to be non-*Code*-based at the onset. In other words, they may have been matters of harassment or discrimination but were determined to be non-*Code* based and better addressed under another policy or through the grievance process. A small number of consultations/complaints fell into the “other” category meaning they had already been dealt with and concluded under another process or a parallel process was already underway in addressing the matter.



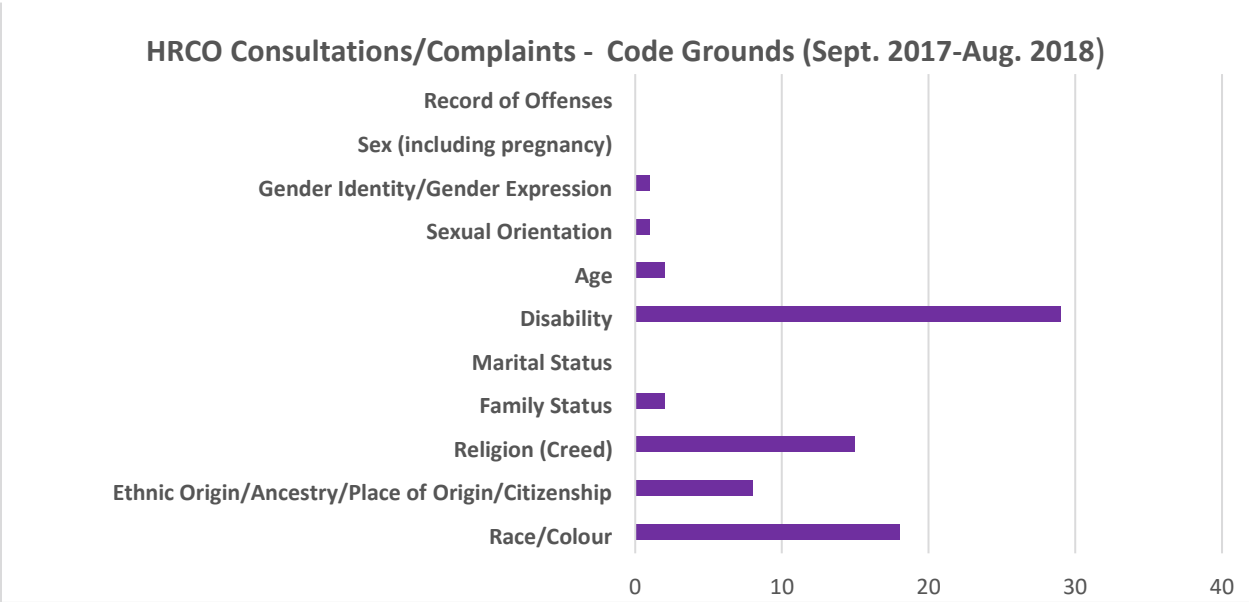
During the reporting period, a total of 162 matters were dealt with through advisory services (60%) compared to 109 matters (40%) that were complaint matters requiring assessment and determination on the HRCO process.

HRCO Complaint Files versus Advisory Services (Sept. 2017-Aug. 2018)



Out of the 76 HRCO case files that were determined to be *Code*-based, the most (38%) fell within the *Code* ground of disability. The *Code* grounds of race and colour (constituted 24%) were combined since such complaints rarely entailed one without association with the other. This was followed by religion or creed, which constituted 15 (20%) of the 76 HRCO case files during the reporting period.

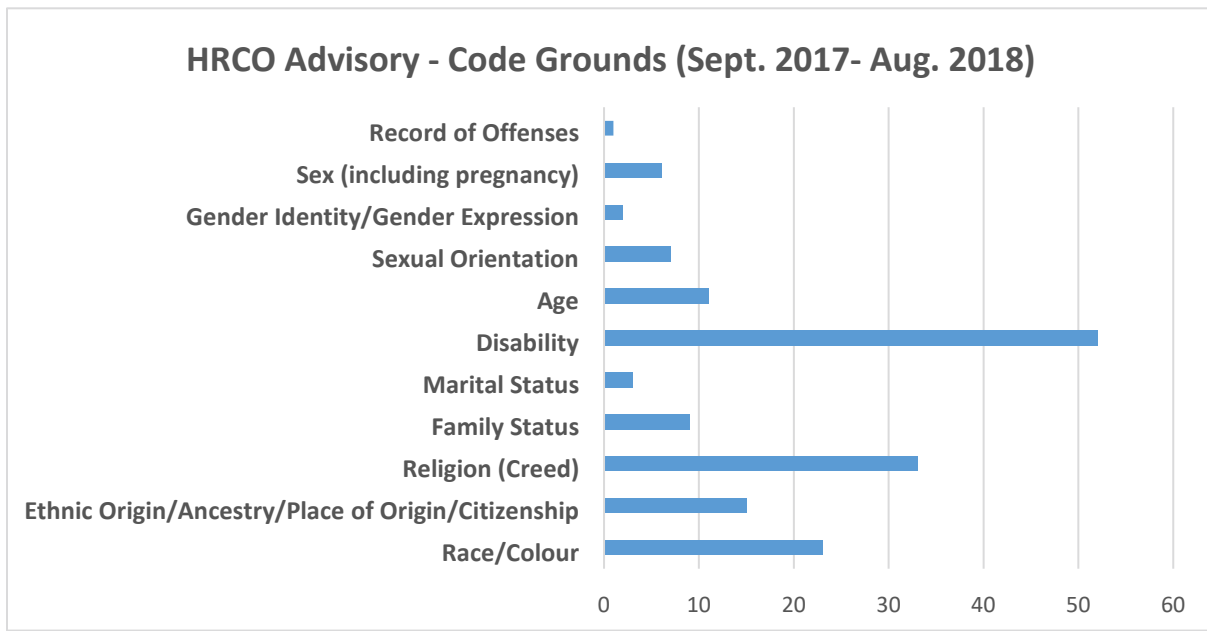
Code-Ground	Complaints/Consultations
Race/Colour	18
Ethnic Origin/Ancestry/Place of Origin/Citizenship	8
Religion (Creed)	15
Family Status	2
Marital Status	0
Disability	29
Age	2
Sexual Orientation	1
Gender Identity/Gender Expression	1
Sex (including pregnancy)	0
Record of Offenses	0



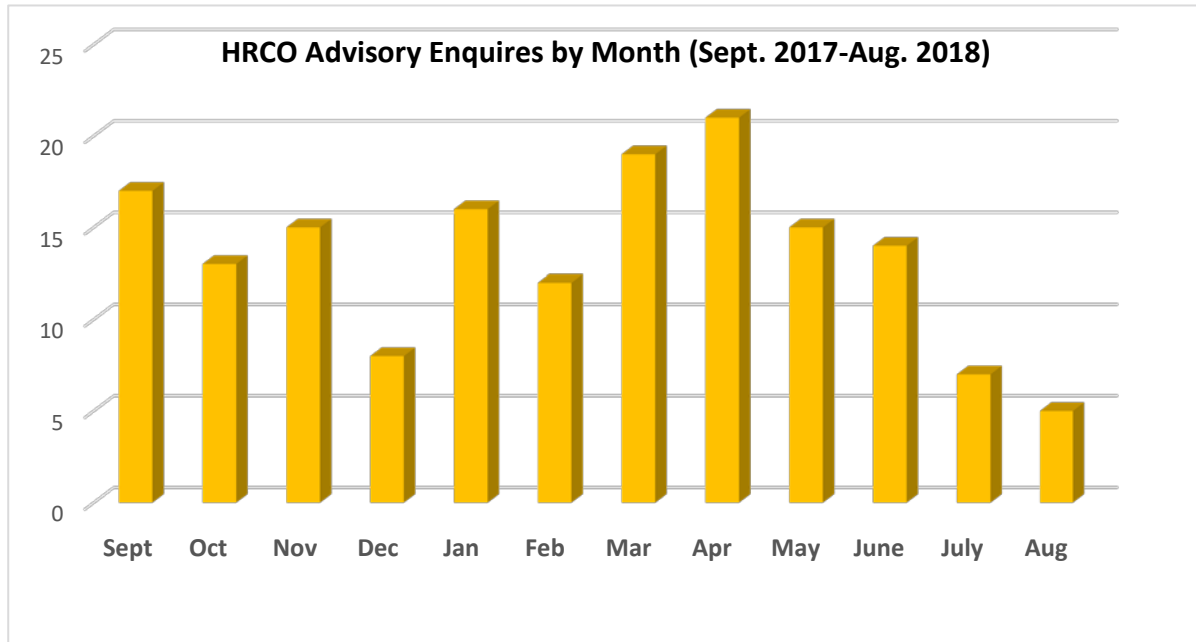
With regard to advisory services, of the 162 enquiries made to the HRCO during the reporting period, the vast majority (52) enquiries pertained to the *Code*-ground of disability. The second was religion or creed, with 33 enquires. The third was race/colour, with 23 enquires.

Code-Grounds	# of Enquiries
Race/Colour	23
Ethnic Origin/Ancestry/Place of Origin/Citizenship	15
Religion (Creed)	33
Family Status	9
Marital Status	3
Disability	52
Age	11
Sexual Orientation	7
Gender Identity/Gender Expression	2
Sex (including pregnancy)	6
Record of Offenses	1

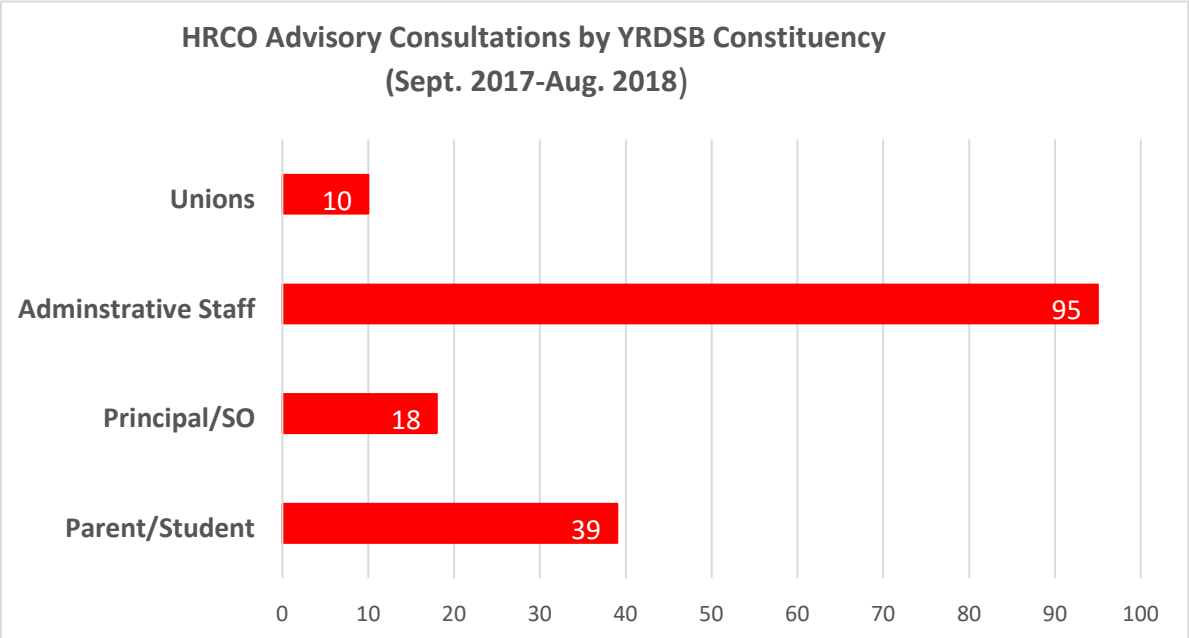
HRCO Advisory Services



With regard to HRCO advisory consultations, the number of enquiries were highest in the months of April (21), March (19) and September (17). The lowest number was during the summer months with seven in July and five in August.



During the reporting period, the highest number (95) of advisory enquires came from administrative staff at the YRDSB and primarily from the Human Resources Department - this was followed by parents and students, which constituted 39 out of the 162 enquiries. Unions constituted the least number of enquiries, with only 10 out of the 162.



Introduction of Revised Policy and Procedure #240, Human Rights: Code-Related Harassment and Discrimination

After comprehensive consultations during the early part of the 2017-18 school year, the Board of Trustees introduced a revised Human Rights Policy to replace the former Respectful Working and Learning Environment Policy to deal only with *Code*-based Complaints. *Non-Code* based complaints are managed under the following:

- 1) **Policy and Procedure #250**, Violence Prevention and Interventions and *Non-Code* Workplace Related Harassment - Employees
- 2) **Policy and Procedure #267**, Supporting Community Concerns
- 3) **Policy #668**, Caring & Safe Schools
- 4) Trustee Code of Conduct

The following were some of key features of Policy #240:

- Use of numerical sections;
- Policy has **8** sections outlining the Application, Definitions and Responsibilities;
- Accompanying procedures has **21** sections which clearly sets out the complaints process
- Discrimination is clearly defined in **Section 3.2**;
- Exceptions - **Section 3.3** – Policy #240 (corresponds to Special Programs (sec 14(1) and Special Employment (Section 24 (1) of *Code*);
- Direct Discrimination, Indirect Discrimination, Discrimination by perception, Discrimination by Association, Adverse Effect Discrimination are defined;
- Duty to Accommodate based on principles of: 1) Respect for Dignity 2) Individualization 3) Integration and full participation;
- Reprisal - negative treatment or the suggestion of negative treatment of a person - because of their involvement in a human rights complaint, investigation or resolution process (noted in **Section 3.6** of Policy #240 and **Section 8** of the *Code*);and
- Malicious/Bad Faith Complaints - a claim that is deliberately and maliciously filed in order to damage the reputation or group or otherwise failed in bad faith (**Section 3.4** of Policy #240).

Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario Applications

Due to the arms-length nature of the HRCO, it is not involved in handling and replying to applications filed against the YRDSB at the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (HRTO). However, in September 2017, the Human Rights Commissioner informed the Superintendent of Human Resources that a complainant who has filed an application to the HRTO should be made aware by way of a written letter informing on the HRCO's internal complaints process. Thus, a complainant who may not have been aware of the HRCO could choose to request that the HRTO application be held in abeyance in order to utilize the HRCO process for early resolution. The HRCO is not aware of any complainant who opted to do so.

In the 2017-2018 school year, 3 HRTO applications were filed on behalf of students and 8 were filed by staff members

Employment Equity

Employment Equity was introduced by the Federal Government to ensure that employers engage in proactive employment practices to increase the representation of four “designated groups”: women, visible minorities, Aboriginal persons and persons with disabilities.

During the 2017-18 reporting period, the YRDSB recognized that Employment Equity is a value at the core of its mandate, having staff reflect the diversity of York Region in general and YRDSB schools in particular. As such, the YRDSB sought to integrate fully the principles of Employment Equity with its Human Resource policies and procedures to ensure that all present and potential employees receive equitable treatment in all matters related to employment. Employment Equity involves hiring and promoting the most suitably qualified candidate while ensuring that the process and the qualifications required are fair and equitable for all persons. Employment Equity does not mean hiring or promoting members of the designated groups over better qualified candidates; it means ensuring that employment systems do not adversely affect designated group members. This means ensuring that the application process, the required job qualifications and the interview and hiring processes are all fair and equitable so that the appropriate qualifications of each candidate are the only criteria upon which a hiring, performance evaluation or promotion decision is made.

Consistent with Human Rights legislation, Employment Equity recognizes the value and dignity of each individual and ensures that each individual will have genuine, open and unhindered access to employment opportunities, free from any barriers, whether systemic or otherwise, based on their membership in a designated group. Under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, discrimination in employment is prohibited on the grounds identified in the *Code*. “Employment” includes fulltime and part-time work, contract work and probationary periods. All aspects of employment are included, from the initial job advertisement to day-to-day operations and promotions. Initially, within the mandate of the Human Rights Commissioner, during the 2017-18 reporting year, it was determined that Employment Equity is better suited to be within the Human Resources portfolio, with the HRCO providing advisory services in the devising of a Board Employment Equity Plan. The YRDSB launched its Employment Equity Audit, consisting of a Workforce Census and an Employment Systems Review.

Turner Consulting Group was retained in December 2017 to conduct a comprehensive Employment Equity Audit and Employment Equity Systems Review (ESR).

The following are four key meetings during the 2017-2018 school year in which the HRCO collaborated with the Employment Equity Planning Group Committee to support the Review:

Meeting #1 - December 20, 2017

- Reviewed with Turner Consulting the scope and timeline for conducting the Employment Equity Census and Focus

Meeting #2 - January 10, 2018

- Reviewed and provided input into Workforce Census and ESR surveys, focus group questions, and interview questions
- Finalized focus group schedule
- Finalized interviewees
- Finalized workforce census and ESR Frequently Asked Questions

Meeting #3 - March 8, 2018

- Reviewed draft Workforce Census Report
- Reviewed draft ESR Report
- Identified additional analysis requirements

Meeting #4 - March 27, 2018

- Large group session to develop Employment Equity Plan

The Employment Systems Review was conducted using the methodology provided by the federal government to guide employers that must comply with the requirements of the *Employment Equity Act* and the work included an assessment of each policy, practice, or system in terms of:

- **Legal compliance:** to ensure compliance with equity-related legislation such as the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, and *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*;
- **Consistency:** to ensure policies and accompanying procedures are applied in a consistent manner throughout the organization;

- **Job relatedness:** to ensure they clearly demonstrate a bona fide occupational requirement, are objective, and constitute a business necessity;
- **Validity:** to determine whether they objectively predict successful job performance
- **Adverse impact:** to assess whether they have a disproportionately negative effect on employees from the equity-seeking groups;
- **Reasonable accommodation:** to assess whether or not there are policies and procedures in place to identify and remove barriers in the workplace that keep qualified employees from participating in all aspects of employment and provide the accommodation needed by employees; and
- **Inclusivity:** to assess whether policies and practices are inclusive of all employees, including those who identify as belonging to equity-seeking groups.

Both qualitative and quantitative data was used between January and March 2018, data was collected through the following:

- Review of employment policies, written procedures, and related documents;
- Review of 25 files for competitions conducted between 2016 and 2018 to assess how policies are implemented and to identify informal practices;
- Twelve focus groups in which 46 employees participated;
- An online Workplace Equity and Inclusion Survey that was distributed to all staff via email, in which 2,462 staff participated; and
- One-on-one interviews with 18 senior managers and seven union representatives.

In total, about 2,500 employees participated in these consultations, representing approximately 20% of the full-time YRDSB workforce.

Accessibility

The accessibility portfolio, specific to accessibility under the *AODA* was transferred to the HRCO in January 2018. Relevant components pertaining to accessibility during the reporting period can be found in the Annual Accessibility Report and Multi-Year Plan submitted in December 2018.

Inclusion Charter

During the reporting period, the HRCO took the lead in participating in developing the Inclusion Charter for the YRDSB. Discussions with York Region about the Inclusion Charter commenced in November 2017. Its intent was to develop a partnership initiative bringing together businesses, community organizations, municipalities, police services, hospitals, school boards, conservation authorities and agencies businesses, community organizations and agencies with a common commitment to welcoming and inclusive communities. By endorsing the Inclusion Charter, participating organizations made a commit to taking action to achieve its vision in their organization and in the community.

A resource was developed to assist members of the Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group (MDIG) and the Community Partnership Council (CPC) during the endorsement process and supports consisting messaging across organizations. The contents were used to develop materials (briefing notes, reports or presentations) required to move the Inclusion Charter initiative forward for endorsement in their organization. This included:

- Contact information
- Next steps
- Key messages
- Background information
- List of Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group (MDIG) members
- List of Community Partnership Council (CPC) members
- Charter text (in Microsoft Word)

The following is a listing of the key timelines for partners that participated in the MDIG with the goal of endorsing the Inclusion Charter:

Organization	Endorsement timing
March 2018	
1. Markham Stouffville Hospital	March 29 – Endorsed
April 2018	
2. York Regional Police	April 25 Presentation received by Police Services Board. Next step - Report to Board with a resolution to endorse (June TBC)
May 2018	
3. Town of Georgina	May 2 – Endorsed Direction for staff to work with Georgina Equity & Diversity Advisory Committee to develop third paragraph for signature by Mayor and Clerk
4. York Region Children’s Aid Society	May – Endorsed Endorsed by senior management with signature by CEO
5. Toronto and Region Conservation Authority	May 25 – Endorsed Presented to the Board for endorsement and signature by Board Chair and CEO
6. Southlake Regional Health Centre	May Has been approved by senior leadership and will be presented this month for endorsement by President/CAO and VP Patient Experience and Chief Nursing Officer
7. York Region District School Board	May YRDSB Inclusion Charter presented to Director’s Council on May 2 and approved to proceed for signature by Director and Chair (signing date pending)
June 2018	
8. City of Markham	June
9. Township of King	June (June 11 – TBC)

10. United Way Greater Toronto	June Charter to be considered by the senior executive team on June 12
11. Mackenzie Health	June Charter developed by Diversity and Inclusion Committee. TBC if endorsed by Senior Leadership Team or Board
12. Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority	June 22 To be endorsed by CAO this month and presented to Board for information and signature by the Chair
13. The Regional Municipality of York	June 28
July 2018	
14. Town of Aurora	July 10 To be presented to Council for endorsement
15. Town of East Gwillimbury	Q3 (July or September)
2019 – Stakeholder Consultations Planned	
16. Town of Newmarket	Plan to work with internal staff committee and stakeholders to develop third paragraph
17. City of Vaughan	Plan to form internal stakeholder committee to develop third paragraph and action plan
Date Pending	
18. York Catholic District School Board	Charter deferred until after public consultations on the upcoming year's budget
19. Town of Richmond Hill	To be confirmed
20. Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville	To be confirmed

In June of 2018, the Inclusion Charter for York Region was presented and endorsed. This Inclusion Charter reflects the YRDSB commitments to student achievement, well-being, excellence in equity, inclusive leadership and building collaborative relationships. In June of 2018, YRDSB created and signed a commitment to the Inclusion Charter.

French Immersion Schools Initiative (FISI)

Core French is a second language program intended to enable students to communicate in French. It is also important to foster a development of openness to cultural diversity. French Immersion differs from Core French in that it functions as a French language program with the goal of developing functionally bilingual students through teaching most of the curriculum with French as the language of instruction. In its [French as a Second Language programs](#), the YRDSB offers both Core French and French Immersion as follows:

- Core French consists of 40 minutes per day of French instruction beginning in Grade 4 at your local school. Enrolment in Core French is automatic when a child reaches Grade 4. Core French is from Grade 4 to Grade 9.
- French Immersion is an optional program that consists of full-day French instruction starting in Grade 1, at a designated school in your attendance area.

It was recommended in the Report that the YRDSB “undertake an equity review and bring about the appropriate systemic changes with respect to staffing in French immersion schools.” A comprehensive review of French Immersion hiring was conducted during the 2017-18 reporting period. It entailed reviewing French Immersion hiring data to ensure appropriate processes were in place for equitable hiring and retention in French Immersion schools. A staff committee continues to meet monthly to monitor, review and plan ongoing interventions, professional development, data and processes.

The HRCO relinquished direct management of the French Immersion Initiative in June 2018 when it was rolled into the overall YRDSB program in devising a comprehensive Employment Equity Plan.

Human Right Complaints Issues Tracking System

Incident tracking is an important way for the YRDSB and the HRCO to be accountable to the public, as well as providing valuable prompts to review organizational performance and the conduct of people that work within the YRDSB. The HRCO defines a complaint broadly as being an expression of dissatisfaction about the Board that may or may not be *Code*-based but where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required. “Wherever possible and appropriate, parties to a complaint are encouraged to resolve concerns, at the

earliest possible stage, independent of the Human Rights Commissioner’s Office”(Section 3.0, Policy #240). In September 2017, the Human Rights Commissioner initiated discussions with senior administrative staff on the need to have a comprehensive tracking system for human rights complaints. The discussions lead to setting up a team to review the option of having a comprehensive Board-wide issues management/tracking system. It was determined that an effective complaint handling system would provide three benefits to the YRDSB:

- Opportunity to track the timeliness and resolution of actual number of human rights issues brought forward across the YRDSB system;
- Provide relevant information that can lead to efficient resolution of a variety of issues at all levels; and
- Where issues/complaints are handled properly, a good system can build trust, improve the reputation of YRDSB and strengthen community confidence in the YRDSB’s administrative processes.

RESOLVE was the name given to the YRDSB Issues Management System that was conceived during the 2017-18 school year. The HRCO defines the YRDSB Community “as members of the Board community, including but not limited to, trustees, committee members, employees, students, parents/guardians, permit holders, vendors, service providers, contractors, volunteers and visitors and all other persons who are invited to or who work on Board property” (Section 2, Policy #240). Thus, RESOLVE had as its mandate, a consideration of the following YRDSB community wants and the organization’s needs:

YRDSB Community Wants:	YRDSB Organization needs:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a user friendly issues/complaint handling system • transparency and accountability • to be heard and understood • to be respected • an explanation of how issues are managed • action as soon as possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a user friendly system for accepting feedback • clear delegations & procedures for staff to deal with issues/complaints and provide remedies • a recording system to capture data • to use data to identify trends, opportunities for improvement and service delivery in identified areas

After a series of preliminary discussions, RESOLVE project was officially launched in April 2018. It set a 314 days' timeline to completion and the following is a listing of key initiatives that were completed during the 2017-18 reporting period:

- Project Initiation (Planning and Resourcing)
- Project Charter /Timelines Approval
- Vendor Selection
- Requirements Confirmation
- Requirements Review /Sign-off
- System Configuration /Customization

The pilot project for RESOLVE is scheduled to be launched at selected YRDSB schools and administrative units in the 2018-19 school year.

Human Rights Training

During the 2017-18 reporting period, the HRCO conducted a number of short, facilitated coaching and training sessions to staffing areas and unions. Prior to the hiring of the new Director of Education, the Human Rights Commissioner provided a facilitated training session in the fall of 2017 for Board trustees. As part of the Ministry's Directions, the majority of the Board's senior administrators and staff participated in human rights training that was provided by an external provider. Subsequently thereafter, a special training session was facilitated by the Human Rights Commissioner to administrators who were unable to attend the initial scheduled training.

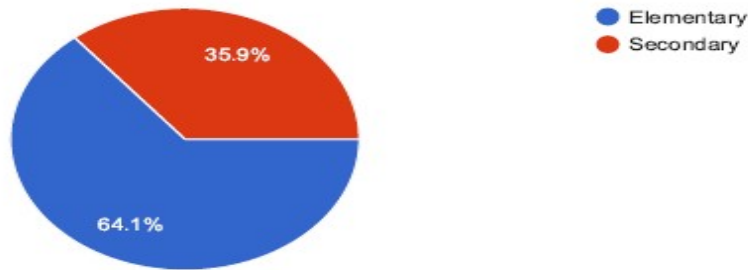
Principal and Manager Training:

- More than 475 principals, vice-principals and managers have received human rights training.

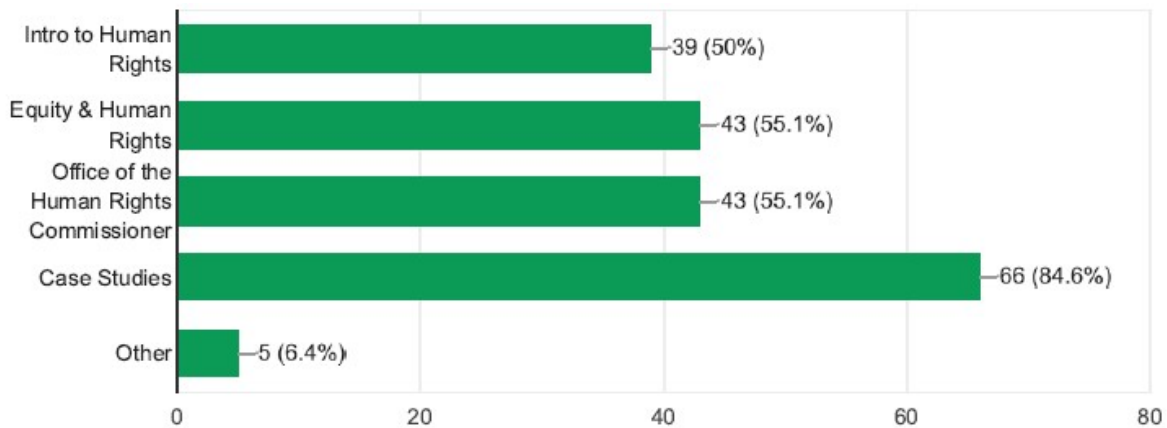
Vice Principal Training:

- In December 2017, the HRCO was made aware that Vice Principals were not part of the training given to senior administrators. In response, the HRCO developed a human rights training module for YRDSB Vice Principals.

- Four Human Rights Training Sessions were offered to Vice Principals in January 2018.
- The chart below indicates the percentage of the total number of Vice Principals who received the training (Elementary and Secondary).



What components of the learning was helpful in your daily practice as a school lead?



The following was the feedback provided in the evaluation:

Preferred areas covered identified by the Vice Principals:

- *Human Rights Legislation (24%)*
- *Leading Human Rights at School (77%)*
- *Case Studies (73%)*
- *A session on Competing Human Rights would be great*

- *Human Rights is an essential and complex topic. Appreciate the opportunity to strengthen understanding of this topic through this training*
- *Great first session. Unpacking Human Rights and being confident in carrying the conversation back to schools is vital*
- *Led to a better understanding of why the work we do is important*
- *Want more follow up sessions*
- *The Commissioner was highly informative, presenters were informative, engaging and knowledgeable*
- *Case studies and specific considerations relating to school scenarios (Human Rights Concepts) were highly informative*
- *Case studies were an excellent way to apply the thinking that was presented*
- *Table discussions were most valuable*
- *Have a deeper understanding of the role of the HRCO*
- *More explanation on vocabulary and concepts of Human Rights*
- *Social identities discussion offered a very real human connection to the workshop*
- *Good balance of personal learning and training related to 'must know' about Human Rights Legislation and its application in school contexts*
- *Appreciate the effort to inform, challenge, and at the same time, empathize with complex requirements of our work*
- *Appreciate the openness and sharing of personal stories, highlighting our identities (and visible identities). Found it inspiring and impactful*
- *Would like more learning on Human Rights & Equity*
- *There is a lot of work ahead of us. Hopefully, training and support will be Board-wide at all levels over time.*

Trustee Training:

The Human Rights Commissioner delivered an interactive training session to Board Trustees on Unconscious Bias on October 25, 2017. The session was also attended by members from the Phelps Group, a placement firm hired for conducting the search for the new YRDSB Director of Education. The session was well-attended by all Trustees with excellent feedback and a clear

understanding of various issues specific to unconscious bias that may be at play during recruitment.

Other Key HRCO Accomplishments (2017-18)

1) Ontario School Boards Human Rights & Equity Leaders Network

Under the leadership of the YRDSB Human Rights Commissioner, the Ontario School Boards Human Rights & Equity Leaders Network Committee (“HREL Network”) was established in January 2018. Its mandate was to elevate and embed human rights, equity, diversity and inclusion within Ontario School Boards, specifically considering interactions and relationships that value difference where individuals are treated fairly, with dignity and respect within a teaching and learning culture that is free from discrimination and harassment. As human rights and diversity practitioners within Ontario School Boards, the goal of HREL Network was to demonstrate a commitment to fostering diverse and inclusive organizational cultures within the founding four Boards. The following was the key commitment agreed by the founding members:

“We believe that this is critical to advancing educational equity and making human rights principles central to a strong public education system. The HREL Network believes that through collaboration and partnership, we can be effective leaders within our respective Boards in embedding a strong human rights culture that is student-centered and driven by principles of equity. We are committed to accept the weight of responsibility that our roles entail in ensuring that education provides the critical social vehicle for transforming lives. We are equally committed to recognizing the myriad of ways in which education allows us to explore new ways of seeing the world, build new horizons and networks, and to significantly enhanced job opportunities. However, not everyone benefits in the same way. Discrimination and harassment issues, marginalization, accessibility concerns and systemic barriers demand that we work collaboratively to tackle issues of common concern to call School Boards in Ontario. Therefore, we are committed to working together on common concerns by exploring innovative research, conducting systems reviews and sharing best practices that are vital toward advancing education equity.”

Five meetings were scheduled between January 2018 and June 2018, with staff from participating GTA school boards. The HREL Network ended in July 2018 with staffing changes in the respective

Boards. A successor network specifically pertaining to human rights for the big three Ontario School Boards was proposed for the commencement of the Fall 2018 school year.

2) Canadian Association for the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment in Higher Education (CAPDHHE) 2018 National Conference

YRDSB's Human Rights Commissioner, Anthony Anirud, was invited to deliver the keynote speech at the CAPDHHE's 2018 National Conference in Toronto hosted by Ryerson University on May 7, 2018. The presentation was a follow-up to the keynote speech delivered at CAPDHHE's 2017 National Conference in Ottawa by Patrick Case, Assistant Deputy Minister, Equity Secretariat, Ministry of Education. The speech provided a positive message that YRDSB is a provincial leader in the advancement of human rights and equity among Ontario School Boards. It set down opportunities for collaboration on best practices with post-secondary institutions, which all have dedicated offices for human rights.

3) HRCO Website

During the reporting period, it was determined that the HRCO required its own presence on the YRDSB website for providing important information on complaints process, accessibility and human rights education. In February 2018, the Human Rights Commissioner established a working group with participation from IT Services and the Corporate Communications to study the feasibility and the process for having a web presence in which members of the YRDSB community would be able to access the HRCO. A logo was designed for the HRCO and webpages were worked on and reviewed. The [HRCO website](#) was launched () in fall 2018, along with a compressive rollout and communication plan.

