



March 2, 2023

Gary Carr  
Regional Chair  
Halton Regional Council

### **Delivered electronically**

Dear Garry Carr and members of the Halton Regional Council:

In 2021, Halton Regional Council and the Halton District School Board independently passed resolutions seeking to enhance inclusivity in learning environments (full text resolutions noted below for reference).

The Halton District School Board has continually worked to advance human rights, confront anti-black racism, and challenge all forms and systems of oppression in an effort to dismantle racism and discrimination, through education. Our Board has delivered learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom to our school communities, aligned to our commitments made in the Way Forward and Multi Year Plan. We have also reviewed and adopted an updated [Equity and Inclusive Education Policy](#) to reflect our commitments as a Board.

We know this important work must continue. I am writing to request a meeting where we can discuss how we can together deliver on the commitments made by both the Halton Regional Council and the Halton District School Board:

- HDSB Board of Trustees seeks to learn more about Regional Council's offer of support and advocacy to all school boards in their efforts to create safe and inclusive learning environments for students.
- HDSB Board of Trustees requests the opportunity to deliver a presentation to Halton Regional Council about the ongoing work of the HDSB, the implementation of The Way Forward and its relationship to the HDSB Multi-Year Plan 2020-24, the work of the Student Senate Equity Subcommittee, the Human Rights and Equity Advisory Committee, the bullying prevention and intervention strategy, and other related initiatives.
- Develop in partnership, a process to better communicate between governing bodies regarding shared concerns and areas of interest.

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Respectfully,



Margo Shuttleworth  
Board Chair

CC: Graham Milne, Regional Clerk

### **Issue Background**

At its meeting on May 19, 2021, the Halton Regional Council received delegations from Halton District School Board Students on the topic of "Inclusive Learning Environments". The regional council showed support for our students by passing the following resolution:

*WHEREAS Halton's Regional Council strongly condemns racist and inflammatory language across Halton Region;*

*WHEREAS the Halton Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Charter was developed by the Halton Equity and Diversity Roundtable which is a collaborative group committed to building systemic inclusion and equity in Halton, and the Charter's vision is "An inclusive community where individuals are valued, respected, and empowered to reach their potential";*

*WHEREAS anti-Black racist vandalism was reported at White Oaks Secondary School in Oakville on March 29, 2021;*

*WHEREAS some Halton students feel that current protocols and procedures are insufficient or are not enforced within their schools;*

*WHEREAS all students should be protected from racism and hateful language within their schools and racism and discrimination in schools is not only a school issue but also a community issue;*

*WHEREAS local Oakville students Tyler Henry and Alexis Graham have consulted with fellow students at White Oaks Secondary School and have developed policy proposals that focus on schools enforcing existing policies, mandatory racial sensitivity learning and accountability for online racism in order to support and help students feel safe in their school environment;*

*WHEREAS Stuart Miller, the Director of Education, Jewel Amoah, Human Rights and Equity Advisor and Rob Eatough, Superintendent of Education at the Halton District School Board (HDSB) met with Tyler Henry and Alexis Graham to discuss their concerns;*

*WHEREAS the (HDSB) has launched the Human Rights Equity Action & Accountability Plan: The Way Forward to reflect the Board's commitment to create and maintain safe, inclusive learning and working environments free from discrimination for students, families, staff and members of the public, and this plan provides specific actions to which the Board will be held accountable by students, staff, families and the community;*

*NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:*

*THAT Regional Council supports efforts by students, teachers and school boards to ensure more inclusive learning environments;*

*THAT Regional Council encourages the HDSB to review and consider the proposals developed by Tyler Henry and Alexis Graham and create a mechanism that encourages Halton students to share their experiences and feedback on existing policies;*

*THAT the Region of Halton offer support and advocacy to all school boards in their efforts to create safe and inclusive learning environments for students;*

*AND THAT, a copy of this resolution be sent to local Members of Provincial Parliament, local Members of Parliament, Premier Doug Ford, the Minister of Education, the Solicitor General and Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism, all school boards in Halton Region and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Ontario's Big City Mayors, the Big City Mayors Caucus (Canada), the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) and the Reach Out Centre for Kids (ROCK).*

At the June 2, 2021 meeting of the Halton District School Board (HDSB), Board of Trustees, the Board passed the following resolution to affirm the Board's efforts in dismantling and eliminating racism:

*Whereas, the Halton District School Board (HDSB) recognizes the systems of oppression that exist within society and educational institutions, and has undertaken significant work to address racism and other forms of discrimination in our schools, workplaces and broader society for several years; and,*

*Whereas, on Feb 19, 2021 the HDSB released an Anti-Racism Public statement to the public to affirm its commitment to dismantling and eliminating racism and other forms of discrimination, and provide details about some of our board's current actions; and,*

*Whereas on May 19, 2021, Halton Region Council unanimously passed a motion regarding Inclusive Learning Environments, which specifically references HDSB students, staff, policies and procedures; and, Whereas, that motion was discussed and passed at Halton Regional Council in absence of engagement with HDSB staff or Trustees; and,*

*Whereas, that motion includes the clause "that the Region of Halton offer support and advocacy to all school boards in their efforts to create safe and inclusive learning environments for students"; and,*

*Whereas, dismantling and eliminating racism must be a process that involves listening to, learning from, and taking meaningful, collaborative action with people who have lived experience; and, Whereas, alignment of actions across organizations such as municipalities and school boards is critical to this; and,*

*Whereas, Trustees reaffirm their individual and collective commitment to actions that dismantle and eliminate all forms of oppression and racism,*

***Be it resolved that the Chair of the HDSB (Chair) reach out to the Chair of Halton Region to request the opportunity to deliver a presentation to Halton Regional Council about the ongoing work of the HDSB, the implementation of The Way Forward and its relationship to the HDSB Multi-Year Plan 2020-24, the work of the Student Senate Equity Subcommittee, the Human Rights and Equity Advisory Committee, the bullying prevention and intervention strategy, among other initiatives, with the aim to inform Halton Regional Council about the focused and deliberate initiatives aimed at dismantling racism and other forms of discrimination in all HDSB schools and workplaces, as well as the HDSB stakeholder community; and,***

***Be it further resolved that the Chair pursue further discussions to gain understanding of the Region's offer of "support and advocacy" and their approach to dismantling and eliminating racism and other forms of discrimination, while reinforcing a whole community partnership approach; and,***

***Be it further resolved that the Chair invite Halton Regional Chair, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Halton Catholic District School Board, the Chair of the French Public and the Chair of the French Catholic Public School Board to a meeting with the Board of Trustees and the Director, to be led by the Chair, to create processes for communication and sharing of approaches and concerns so that together we can dismantle racism and other forms of discrimination; and,***

*Be it further resolved that the Board request the Director to enhance the Board's internal and external communication to reach broader audiences on a regular and timely basis with the aim of keeping community members informed about all HDSB initiatives, including those aimed at dismantling systemic racism and other forms of discrimination;*

*AND Be it further resolved that the Director be requested to establish an HDSB Student Equity Committee for the purpose of engaging students in collaboratively identifying strategies to address concerns and identify actions to dismantle racism/*