

Focused Recruitment of Black and Indigenous Educators

Questions and answers

1. Why is the Peel board trying to recruit Black and Indigenous educators?

At the Regular Meeting of the Board on March 25, 2019, Peel District School Board trustees approved a motion to embark on a focused recruitment initiative to hire Black and Indigenous teachers to further support the work of [We Rise Together](#) - the action plan to identify, understand, minimize and eliminate the marginalization experienced by Black students, and *the Indigenous Education Action Plan* - the action plan to identify, understand, minimize and eliminate the marginalization experienced by Indigenous students.

The Peel board is taking an intentional approach to recruit and hire Black and Indigenous Educators to help enhance student outcomes for Black and Indigenous students who historically have disproportionately negative educational experiences. The same qualifications and standard of success is applied to all candidates, irrespective of how they identify.

2. What specific work is the board undertaking to recruit Black and Indigenous educators?

The initiative is in its early stages and will evolve over time. Early actions include promotion of the initiative, community outreach, information sessions and an internal consultation that will help inform next steps in this work.

3. What about students from other racial backgrounds and identities who also need to be represented amongst Peel staff?

Although it is important that organizations are reflective of the broad range of diversity that lives in the community, this initiative is not about representation. This initiative is an evidence-based approach to improve student success for Black and Indigenous students who have experienced long-standing, systemic issues rooted in a national history of colonialism, slavery and anti-Black/Indigenous racism.

4. How does the board know this initiative will help?

Research has shown that Black and Indigenous students achieve greater student success when they have access to even one teacher of their racial identity throughout their academic career. As an example, recent research suggests that with exposure to just one Black teacher in the primary grades, a Black student is 13% more likely to enroll in college. With two Black teachers, this number increased to 32% (Gershenson, Hart, Hyman, Lindsay, & Papageorge, 2018).

Please see our [resource document](#) for more information.

5. Does this initiative discriminate against non-Black/Indigenous educators? Is it legal?

The Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC) allows for governments and employers to run “Special Programs” designed to help groups of people that have historically experienced disadvantage to achieve equity and equal opportunity. This initiative aligns with this.

For more information visit the OHRC website: <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/your-guide-special-programs-and-human-rights-code>

6. Does this mean the Peel board won't hire educators of other racial backgrounds/identities?

The Peel board will continue to recruit and hire the most qualified educators from any racial backgrounds/identities who want to use their skills to help support all students.

7. Why is the board hiring based on racial background/identity? Shouldn't the Peel board hire the most qualified candidate for the job?

We are engaging in a focused recruitment initiative for Black and Indigenous educators to help support student success for Black and Indigenous students who have historically experienced disadvantage. The same qualifications and standard of success is applied to all candidates, irrespective of how they identify.

8. In the midst of cuts to public education, are teaching positions available at the Peel board?

The cuts do not impact the Peel board's regular hiring practice to attract and hire staff for occasional teaching positions, for which there is still a need. We want to diversify our supply list of occasional teachers by increasing the number of qualified Black and Indigenous teachers. These occasional teaching roles may lead to full-time teaching positions should positions become available in the future.

9. How is this work aligned with the Peel board's goals and other work?

This work is directly tied to one of the Peel board's main goals in its [Plan for Student Success](#) – to achieve inclusion for all through continuous progress on equity. The initiative also further supports the work of *We Rise Together* - the action plan to identify, understand, minimize and eliminate the marginalization experienced by Black students, and the *Indigenous Education Action Plan* - the action plan to identify, understand, minimize and eliminate the marginalization experienced by Indigenous students.

This work also supports the Ministry of Education's [Equity Education Action Plan](#), which includes an action item to “Work with school boards to establish a focus on diversity in teacher and Early Childhood Educator (ECE) recruitment and hiring processes. Strengthening diversity in leadership and in the classroom helps not only to promote a sense of belonging among students, but also helps to bolster innovation and creativity in the school environment.”

10. Will this initiative take away from other board programs or resources?

The focused recruitment initiative will not take any resources away from other programs. The board is committed to the success of all students, as shown through a number of specialized programs and initiatives available to our wide range of diverse learners.