



Park West School Division

Learners Today, Leaders Tomorrow

Date: Tuesday, April 23, 2024

Topic: **Divisional Statement on Anti-Racism Education**

As members of an increasingly diverse province, it is important that we work together to find solutions to the new and continuing challenges and problems posed by racism and inequity. Manitoba Education is currently facilitating engagement sessions regarding their updated Anti-Racism Policy. Park West School Division is committed to fostering an inclusive and equitable learning environment for all. As a key part of this mission, we stand firmly in support of anti-racism education.

Racism, religious intolerance, homophobia, gender-based violence, resistance to the inclusion of persons with differing abilities, and other forms of discrimination are still all too evident in society. The events of the past year, both provincially and globally, have highlighted the urgent need for confronting systemic racism and prejudice in all its forms. Given the pivotal role that education has in enacting social change, we recognize our responsibility as a school division to actively address these issues.

Anti-racism education has the potential to empower our students, staff, and communities with the knowledge, skills, and empathy necessary to challenge injustice and champion diversity. Our schools need to reflect diverse perspectives and histories, fostering critical thinking and empathy among our students, while providing opportunities for our educators to enhance their cultural competency to facilitate meaningful discussions on race and identity in the classroom.

In our division, over 22% of our students are Indigenous. We are fortunate to have four First Nation communities within our footprint. As part of our focus on anti-racism education, Park West School Division is committed to the principles of Truth and Reconciliation. We acknowledge the historical and contemporary manifestations of racism that have affected Indigenous people in Canada and resulted in the dispossession of their lands and the destruction of their languages, cultures, spiritualities, and communities. Park West School Division respects the Treaties that were made on these territories, we acknowledge the harms and the mistakes of the past, and we dedicate ourselves to move forward in partnership with Indigenous communities, in the spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.

Contemporary research overwhelmingly supports the importance of anti-racism education in fostering inclusive and equitable learning environments. To that end, Park West School Division remains dedicated to integrating the latest findings from academic research into our approach to anti-racism education, ensuring that our work is informed by the most effective strategies and methodologies available.

Park West School Division is committed to fostering a safe and supportive learning environment where every student feels valued and respected regardless of their race, ethnicity, or background. We will continue to implement proactive measures to address and prevent instances of racism and discrimination within our schools.