

# STATE OF EQUITY IN EDUCATION

## SUMMARY & CALLS TO ACTION

NEWCOMER EDUCATION  
COALITION

The underlying theoretical lens used by the *State of Equity in Education Report* is based on critical social theory and anti-racism theory. A key feature of a systemic racism lens identified by Sefa-Dei (2013) is to acknowledge that no policies are neutral and that the spoken and unspoken tensions regarding unbalanced power and social relations need to be brought to the forefront of initiatives to promote greater equity and change in our community.

Young (1990) further brings attention to the impact of issues of inclusion and exclusion in the decision-making structures, how these structures enact and reproduce their power, and how these decision-making structures causally condition the distribution of rights, opportunities and resources.

Research undertaken for the *State of Equity in Education Report* identifies limited representation of newcomer and racialized persons at decision-making tables of boards of school trustees. In 2018, of the 54 school trustees on the school boards of the six school divisions in the city of Winnipeg, only 3 were trustees who were persons from racialized communities. While the intent of the representatives at these decision-making tables undoubtedly have the best interests of all students in mind, the context regarding a critical social theory and anti-racism lens is based on the impact of their actions and not their intent.

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The shortages of racialized teachers in public schools in the city of Winnipeg and the inadequate progress to date that the faculties of education have had in addressing the racialized teacher shortage points to the urgent need for action that is based on accountability benchmarks and defined timelines.

The key guiding principle of this *State of Equity in Education Report* is premised on the belief that in order for educational outcomes to improve for newcomer and racialized students, they must see themselves better reflected in the curriculum and teaching staff in their schools. This cannot be achieved without acknowledging and addressing the systemic barriers faced by racialized persons in the education system.

The following Calls to Action identify an alternative vision for educational stakeholders and the next steps that need to be taken in order to address the shortage of newcomer/racialized teachers in our community.

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# CALLS TO ACTION

## CALL TO ACTION – COMMUNITY:

While many people who are newcomers are racialized, not all newcomers are racialized. As well, not all people who are racialized would see themselves as newcomers. The terminology often used for newcomer/racialized people in existing human resource policies involving employment equity is “visible minorities.” A working group should be developed within the newcomer/racialized community networks to identify community-based approaches to:

- a) Identify the terms that should be used within employment equity policies and practices with respect to referencing persons from newcomer/racialized communities; and
- b) Make recommendations to the provincial government, school divisions and universities on options about how demographic data could be collected for newcomer/racialized students and teachers, including the precedents of how the provincial government and school divisions have data collection systems for Indigenous students and teachers.

## CALL TO ACTION – SCHOOL DIVISIONS:

- a) School divisions in the city of Winnipeg need to be more intentional and accountable about addressing the shortage of newcomer and racialized teachers by establishing targets and monitoring results through the development and implementation of an employment equity policy and program in each of the school divisions in Winnipeg.
- b) Employment equity reports should be released publicly on an annual basis that are readily accessible to the public in order to promote transparency and accountability.
- c) Existing human resource policies and practices within school divisions should be reviewed to identify barriers and promising practices regarding the recruitment, hiring, retention and promotion of racialized teachers.
- d) Employment equity policies should be modernized and based on targets proportionate to the student population of the school division in order that the number of racialized teachers working in schools better reflects the racialized student population being served.

## CALL TO ACTION – FACULTIES OF EDUCATION:

- a) The faculties of education should set equity enrollment targets for racialized students similar to the Diversity Admissions Policy established by the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. An annual racialized student equity enrollment and graduation report should be released publicly that is readily accessible in order to promote transparency and accountability.
- b) The universities of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Saint-Boniface and Brandon should disaggregate or breakdown employment equity data for the respective universities as a whole to faculty levels and provide annual employment equity reports that include (1) targets for racialized faculty and staff; (2) self-identification form completion rates; (3) identification of employed faculty and staff by job categories, including number of self-identified racialized persons; (4) retention rates of racialized faculty and staff; and (5) promotion data of racialized faculty and staff. This annual faculty employment equity report should be released publicly on an annual basis that is readily accessible in order to promote transparency and accountability.

## CALL TO ACTION – PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT:

- a) The limited representation of racialized persons on school boards needs to be structurally addressed by establishing designated seats on governance structures, whether this is the board of trustees or appointed advisory councils, for racialized persons that reflect and are proportionate to the population of racialized students being served. In order to further address the issue of marginalization, consensus decision-making rather than majority-rule processes should be mandated to ensure all voices are authentically included around decision-making tables.
- b) The Department of Education of the Manitoba provincial government should collect and publish on a three-year period basis self-identification student and teacher data for racialized persons broken down by individual school divisions, with data collection strategies and approaches made in consultation with newcomer community organizations.

## CALL TO ACTION – STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION:

The representation of newcomer and racialized persons’ voices needs to be at the decision-making tables in order to confront systemic racism, and imbalanced power and social relations for initiatives to address the shortage of newcomer and racialized teachers in the city of Winnipeg. Newcomer organizations, Manitoba School Boards Association, Manitoba Association of School Superintendents, Manitoba Teachers’ Society, Deans of the Faculties of Education, and Ministry of Education should establish a *More Newcomer and Racialized Teachers Initiative* to:

- a) identify the barriers faced by racialized persons to become teachers;
- b) develop recruitment strategies to increase the pool of racialized persons to become teachers;
- c) develop and implement teacher education programs for newcomers and racialized persons that address their needs and aspirations, including: (1) transition programs for term contract teachers to permanent contract positions; (2) transition programs for substitute teachers to permanent contract positions; (3) transition programs for Internationally Educated Teachers; and (4) the development and implementation of retention and promotion initiatives within school divisions for racialized teachers and staff; and;
- d) develop a 5-year action plan with clear benchmarks and timelines, including annual update reports that would be released publicly to promote transparency and accountability.

## REFERENCES:

1. Sefa-Dei, G. 2013. Reframing Critical Anti-Racist Theory for Contemporary Times. *Counterpoints* 445. (1-185).
2. Young, I. 1990. *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.