



Setting the Standard for Great Teaching  
Fixer la norme pour un enseignement de qualité

July 16, 2020

The Honourable Stephen Lecce  
Minister of Education  
438 University Avenue, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto ON M7A 2A5

Dear Minister Lecce,

We are pleased to support the Ministry of Education's initiatives to eradicate systemic racism and discrimination in Ontario schools.

The Ontario College of Teachers is committed to working closely with you to develop the language that informs legislative change and actions that eliminate systemic barriers to help students feel safe, accepted, and excited for equal opportunities to enhance their learning, life and career prospects.

As we have in the past, we offer our collective expertise and experience in a measured, thoughtful and collaborative approach towards our mutually-agreed goal.

The measures you recently announced align with our own actions.

The concepts of inclusivity, self-reflection, diversity and public voice infuse every aspect of our work, including initial teacher education, ongoing teacher education and professional advice.

In the last few weeks, we have seen examples of social injustice and inequity around the world. Along with individual citizens and major corporations, the Ontario College of Teachers has responded.

We have contracted Karen Murray, OCT, the Centrally Assigned Principal for Equity, Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression at the Toronto District School Board, to help develop an Additional Qualification guideline for a course on anti-Black racism. Murray has supported the AQ policy development and implementation work of the College for many years and has been an instructor for the Teacher Leadership AQ highlighting equity leadership. As well, she was part of the provincial writing team for the Inclusive Classroom AQ. She has facilitated multiple educative sessions related to the adoption of an anti-oppressive stance within Aqs for AQ providers, course designers and course facilitators.

Professional advisories provide a unique opportunity to inform all members of the sector simultaneously with information that is vital to their daily practice and which upholds the ethical and practice standards of the teaching profession. As such, we welcome the opportunity to work closely with the Ministry to develop a professional advisory for the 234,000 Ontario Certified Teachers that heightens their awareness, responsibility and efforts to address anti-Black racism and other forms of discrimination.

As the regulator for Ontario's teaching profession, we encourage our members to make self-reflection a part of their professional growth. We must also practice what we preach, including how we, as an organization, strive to improve and strengthen our commitment to principles of inclusion, equity and fairness.

We will conduct additional customized training sessions for all Council members and staff to further enrich our professional development specific to anti-Black racism, inclusivity and diversity. By examining and understanding unconscious biases, we hope to make our workplace that much more inclusive. Further, we are seeking our employees' thoughts about how we treat people with respect to race in order to identify ways to improve. We will start conversations, dig deeper into areas of concern, and make the necessary changes.

We welcome the chance to work closely with you to explore and propose proportionate amendments to our Act, "to ensure there are clear, transparent, and effective accountability and recourse measures in rapidly responding to instances and allegations of anti-Black racism and discrimination".

Finally, we welcome the dialogue and collaboration that propels the change we all desire.

Sincerely,



Nicole van Woudenberg, OCT  
Chair of Council



Chantal Bélisle, OCT  
Deputy Registrar

Copy: Nancy Naylor, Deputy Minister of Education

NvW/CB/tk-ccs