

CURRENTS

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READINGS IN RACE RELATIONS

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DISPATCH

RACE EQUITY IN EDUCATION

Also

**Anti-Racist
Education**

**Community
Participation
in Education**

**Training of School
Administrators**

**Barriers to
Implementing
Policy**

**Community
Colleges and
Equal Access**

**Who Seeks
The Work?**

Published by THE URBAN ALLIANCE ON RACE RELATIONS



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CURRENTS: *Readings in Race Relations* is the quarterly magazine of the Urban Alliance on Race Relations.

The Urban Alliance on Race Relations formed in July 1975 "to promote a stable and healthy multiracial environment in the community," is a non-profit organization made up of volunteers from all sectors of the community.

The Urban Alliance on Race Relations is an educational agency and an advocate and intermediary for the visible minorities. It works toward encouraging better race relations, increased understanding and awareness among our multicultural, multi-racial population through programmes of education directed at both the private and public sectors of the community. It is also focusing its efforts on the institutions of our society including educational systems, employment, government, media, legislation, police, social service agencies and human services, in order to reduce patterns of discrimination and inequality of opportunity which may exist within these institutions.

The work of the organization is carried out through working committees such as: Educational Institutions; Legislation; Media; Law Enforcement

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Education Equity

Race relations must be a central concern for all those professionally involved in education. Eliminating racism can no longer be seen as marginal. The response of all educators is to examine all aspects of their procedures, practices and provision that might discriminate, exclude or otherwise disadvantage racial minorities in terms of access to, and participation in, educational opportunities.

Another nice piece of rhetoric you might say because you have heard, read or said something similar a hundred times before! And you have just seen another report containing another 100 recommendations as to how the educational system can better serve minority needs. To paraphrase somebody else, it seems that never in the field of policy-making have so many recommendations been made with so little effect. It has become a platitude to comment on the system's avoidance and resistance to change and the patchy, ad-hoc, incremental progress that has been made.

Why should this be so when existing Canadian law demands the elimination of racial discrimination, and existing legislation and policies within the context of education demands that all students should enjoy equal educational opportunity so that they may develop as completely as possible their individual abilities and interests?

The leading article in this issue of *Currents* summarizes the principles of a race and ethnocultural equity policy that has been developed for the Ontario Ministry of Education. It is a comprehensive and important document. It is significant in that for the first time the Ministry of Education has moved beyond the racially inexplicit nature of policies and recommendations - of "deracialising" racism, to a direct acknowledgment that "present education itself is bound up with the origins, growth and consequences of racism." The proposed policy has therefore been developed within a context "that conscious and active anti-racist educational efforts are now necessary if all our students are to develop to their full human potential".

And yet while this document is extremely useful in outlining what these anti-racist educational efforts should be, it is clearly limiting the role of the Ontario Government and placing all the onus of responsibility on local Boards of Education. The Provincial role is to advise, to assist, to promote, and to serve as a catalyst. It is a persuasive rather than an obligatory position. Such passing of the buck is not good enough. It would appear that the Ministry of Education is abdicating its legislative mandate.

What is the potential of the Ministry of Education policy document serving as an agent of change in educational practice? While serving a useful starting point, policy statements are really of limited value in actually combatting racial inequality. Policy statements cannot in themselves function as change agents. General statements in themselves will be insufficient to ensure a positive response from Boards of Education that they will promote and effect changes in school practices.

The Ministry of Education should issue a lead in combatting racial inequality. As a coordinator of change, it should specify how it will respond if Boards of Education request further help, what action will be taken if Boards fail to comply, and how it will ensure that Boards have taken policy implementation seriously.

Dynamics of Change

Change does not come about as a result of a rational, intellectual process of understanding. Nor does change occur as the result of the operation of an 'invisible hand' of organization dynamics. Implementation of policy must acknowledge the full complexity of the system it is attempting to change and locate itself within the context of some of the obstacles to its implementation. It is naive to ignore the institutional constraints and limits to reform or the prevailing professional ideologies, values and networks. While acknowledging national and international factors as enabling conditions that can precipitate change, the real impetus has

been and will continue to be *community* pressure. It is therefore misleading to denude the pursuit of education equity of any political dimension. Change is only precipitated by political imperatives. Does it matter whether the motivation to act is based on fear, preventive, moral panic, or altruism? Does it matter whether the response is based on attempts to appease, to defuse discontent, to manage a crisis, to repair the meritocratic credibility of schools, or to avoid separate educational institutions?

The point is, as one concerned parent has said, "A community cannot be passive and allow a racist education system to disadvantage our children".

Tim Rees

The Development of a Policy on Race and Ethnocultural Equity

Report of the Provincial Advisory Committee on Race Relations.

The Ontario Ministry of Education sponsored a provincial conference in March, 1986 on the topic "Race and Ethnocultural Relations". In a letter welcoming participants, Premier David Peterson expressed the hope that the conference would "be a catalyst for all school boards to take a visible leadership role in actively developing and implementing a race relations policy."

At the conclusion of the conference, the Minister of Education asked school boards that have not adopted race relations policies to "very carefully assess the contemporary reality in which they now find themselves and to develop policies that they deem appropriate for their school, their board, their community." At the same time the Minister announced that a provincial advisory committee would be formed to provide input "so that the commitment to develop a generic provincial race relations policy that will serve as a model for all school boards in Ontario can be discharged."

The following excerpts from the Committee's Report describe the mission statements for each of the nine areas of concern identified. Within each of these areas the Report goes on to list a number of priorities which are intended to inform and facilitate for individual boards the identification of local priorities and the discussion and drafting of policy within the area of concern. While draft guidelines only, the principles contained in these mission statements provide a significant and far-reaching measure of the potential scope and scale of equity policy in Canada's educational systems.

1. Leadership

The Ministry of Education recognizes that school boards must provide informed leadership at every level, if we are to achieve race and ethnocultural equity.

The Ministry encourages those in positions of Board leadership to actively foster an environment of respect for the racial and ethnocultural plurality of Canadian society;

and to take the lead in the development of anti-racist education by involving all of the Board's diverse constituencies in the development of Race and Ethnocultural Equity Policies.

The role of school principals and administration is pivotal. So too is the visible leadership of trustees, superintendents, principals, and teachers, via the development of policies to eliminate racism in their own leadership selection processes.

2. School and Community Relations

The Ministry of Education recognizes the capability of school boards to engage in constructive and open dialogue with parent and community groups, and thereby to increase co-operation and collaboration among home, school, and community.

The Ministry encourages school boards to take affirmative steps to ensure the active participation of racial and ethnocultural minorities in the development of equitable educational policies and practices.

Just as the involvement of this wider community is essential in the development of each young person, so too it is essential in the process of identifying and eliminating barriers to the full and unrestricted involvement of all racial and ethnocultural minorities in our society. If schooling is to become reflective of a multicultural society, all racial and ethnocultural groups must be actively involved in shaping Ontario schools. The challenge of the coming years will be for school boards to provide leadership in valuing, promoting and increasing this active involvement.

3. Leadership

The Ministry of Education recognizes the potential for all school boards to undertake and promote research on the impact of ethnicity, race, and racism on the successful education of all

students in their jurisdictions.

The Ministry urges school boards to examine the research that has been undertaken about race relations and anti-racist education, as a prelude to giving appropriate weight to equity policy issues in any local studies.

Research in the field of anti-racist education is sparse. Two reasons for this seem apparent. First, racism is an issue most Canadians do not acknowledge, so its insidious societal effects do not receive the attention of academics, or of groups with the resources for such studies. A second reason for the paucity of research on anti-racist education has been the national focus on multiculturalism. Supported by legislative force and government funding, the focus on celebratory multiculturalism has taken precedence over the need for action to encounter racism. It is therefore now necessary to identify racism in current practices, to isolate it, and to deal with it constructively.

The Committee recognizes that school boards differ in the resources available for research activities. Boards with well-staffed research departments, those with a single research officer or with their research done externally on contract, and those that rely heavily on the reports of research done elsewhere together comprise a powerful network for learning that must be activated.

4. Curriculum

The Ministry recognizes that much existing curriculum focuses on the achievements and experiences of Europeans, and that such curricula ill-prepare today's students to function effectively in multiracial Ontario.

The Ministry encourages all school boards to develop and implement equity policy criteria to govern the creation of all curriculum guidelines, and the selection of all instructional material or resources by the board.

"Curriculum planning is a process that must be widely shared. Working within the boundaries of provincially and locally established purposes and priorities, those most aware of children's needs and communities' expectations — parents, teachers, principals, supervisory officials, as well as the children themselves — must be involved in the planning process [Ministry of Education, *The Formative Years*, 1975;2]."

Students must be able to analyse the historical and contemporary forces that contribute to racism in Canada. They must learn that racism and all forms of inequity will not be tolerated in Canadian society. In order to do so, they must learn what racism and inequity are, and how to recognize and deal with them.

If curricula are to be restructured to reflect the realities of multiracial/multicultural society and to demonstrate a commitment to equity, then guidelines for the restructuring process must explain how the often unconscious transmission of Eurocentric, social and economic norms and expectations to students takes place. These norms are so much a part of traditional schooling in a middle class Canadian context that they are seldom questioned and consciously examined.

This hidden curriculum promotes and sustains racism by omission and commission. An ethic of equity must permeate the explicit curriculum, or the negative influence noted here will continue.

5. Personnel Policies and Practices

The Ministry recognizes that an effective policy on race and ethnocultural equity depends very much on the nature, quality, composition, and behaviour of a school board's personnel. Race equity in education can be best achieved when all members of a board's workforce understand the intent and provisions of the board's equity policy. Such policies will be best understood if they apply to the Board's own personnel policies and practices. The Ministry encourages all school boards in conjunction with their employees and

their school community to develop equitable criteria in the areas of employee evaluation, hiring and promotion, with a view to ensuring the removal of all institutional barriers to equal employment opportunity.

In terms of recommendation 77 of the Special Parliamentary Committee on Participation of Visible Minorities in Canadian Society, "governments and school boards should introduce affirmative action programs to increase the number of racial/ethnocultural minorities in teaching and administrative positions."

Race and ethnocultural equity in this area will come with the recognition that schools with staff as racially diverse as our society is, with women and men in every area of employment, can have the edge in terms of the range and quality of the services they deliver. A policy to eradicate all forms of inequity from employment and promotion decisions is the crucial first step on this road.

6. Staff Development

The Ministry of Education recognizes that the staff and trustees responsible for the educational development of the children and youth of Canada's multi-racial society need opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviours, necessary for effectively combating individual and institutional racism.

The Ministry of Education encourages school boards to include criteria for appropriate staff training in the area of race and ethnocultural equity.

Combating racism in schools requires the co-operation, active participation, and commitment of trustees and all staff. This includes teachers and librarians, principals, superintendents, directors, guidance counsellors, psychologists, social workers, secretarial staff, nurses, custodial staff, bus drivers, crossing guards, cafeteria personnel/lunchroom supervisors, educational assistants, and hall supervisors.

Staff training in anti-racist education, can raise staff sensitivity to manifestations of racism and to its effects. This heightened awareness can better enable them to work to change discriminatory behaviours, institutional practices and bias that impact nega-

tively on the learning process.

7. Assessment and Placement

The Ministry of Education recognizes that while it is ministry policy that all students should enjoy equal opportunity to develop their individual abilities and interests, concern is being expressed that young people from certain racial and/or ethnocultural groups are being streamed into inappropriate programs.

The Ministry of Education encourages all school boards to put policies in place to monitor the assessment and placement of children, facilitate the involvement of parents in this process and assess the equity of student services.

Research reveals that many standardized tests (achievement, aptitude and psychological) are racially and culturally biased. Assessments which rely heavily on the results of these tests contribute to an accumulation of information about minority children that is often invalid and prejudicial. Use of such data can result in misconceptions about students' capabilities and lead to inappropriate programming. It is critical that assessment procedures reflect life and cultural experiences of children from racial and ethnocultural minorities.

Recent research has found a correlation between cultural diversity and cognitive styles. Children are not homogeneous in their affective and cognitive responses to the environment. However, the majority of teachers and other personnel interacting with students have been trained in the assumptions and values of the dominant culture. They may assume that their own cognitive style and frame of affective and values reference are the only legitimate ones, rather than some of many in a galaxy of ways of thinking.

Anti-racist assessment allows every student to demonstrate personal achievement and abilities in relation to the goals of the educational system, while evaluating how well the system is meeting the needs of every student.

8. Support Services in Guidance

The Ministry of Education recognizes that because counsellors play a critical role in the assessment and placement

of students, educational planning, and career orientation and planning, guidance counsellors can exercise a powerful role in identifying racism, helping to dismantle discriminatory barriers, and providing proactive strategies to ensure that racial and ethnocultural minority students achieve their full potential.

The Ministry of Education encourages all school boards to promote the development of cross-cultural counselling skills, and to develop equity policy criteria for the review of streaming, assessment, career guidance, and placement.

Guidance and counselling is an area of great importance because it provides students with the opportunities to:

- know and appreciate themselves;
- relate effectively to others;
- develop appropriate educational plans;
- explore a range of career alternatives.

9. Racial/Ethnocultural Harassment

The Ministry of Education believes that it is the responsibility of every school board in Ontario to condemn

and refuse to tolerate any racial/ethnocultural harassment perpetrated by anyone in schools, whether it be intended or unintended.

The Ministry urges all school boards to draft policies which enable any constituent of the board to deal decisively and quickly with any incident of racial/ethnocultural harassment.

Racial/ethnocultural harassment involves verbal or physical interactions which express negative attitudes, derogation, and/or hate for a person or persons based on their race, skin colour, ethnicity, language or religion. Racial/ethnocultural harassment in schools can involve students, teaching and non-teaching staff, administrators, trustees, others contracted by the board, and visitors to school premises, or combinations of any of these groups. Whether deliberate or unconscious, racial/ethnocultural harassment is likely to cause hurt, humiliation, shame, and/or anger. Such incidents are inimical to the healthy positive environment necessary in any school if all children are to enjoy equal educational opportunity and if all adults are

to enjoy equal employment opportunity.

Racial/ethnocultural harassment in schools is manifested in racist name-calling, jokes and slurs, graffiti, insults, threats, discourteous treatment, intimidation, and written or physical abuse. Such harassment may be of a subtle nature or it may be overt. In all cases it is the responsibility of the school system (a) to take an immediate and consistent stand in response to such behaviours, and (b) to make it known that such socially disruptive and psychologically destructive incidents will not be tolerated within the system.

Affirmative Action in Education

Indian/Native Education in Saskatchewan

Based upon international documents to which Canada is a signator, and based upon national and provincial legislation, there is a legal, as well as moral, responsibility on Canadian society to develop an education system that provides equal benefit to all members. This is the mandate within which legislators, human rights commissions, boards of education, teachers and parents must operate.

Throughout 1985, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission undertook an extensive process of consultation and research* to address the concern that students of Indian ancestry are not receiving equal benefit from the education system.

In addressing this concern, the

Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission utilised both the terminology and technology of affirmative action, acknowledging that it is the most comprehensive strategy yet developed to counteract and eliminate systemic discrimination. Affirmative action is a method for identifying and eliminating barriers, and for assisting those groups of people who have suffered the effects of past discrimination to achieve equality in our educational systems.

THE GOAL: EQUALITY

What is equality? There are two main approaches relevant to the educational system:

- Equality of opportunity
- Equality of results

Equality of opportunity is likened to identical treatment. If one treats every individual the same then that person has had equal opportunity or identical treatment.

Equality of results implies that one be given equal opportunity, but in addition to that, a system or institution will be looked at to determine whether on a proportionate basis a minority group has achieved the expected proportionate representation. In the education system context, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission asked whether the percentage of students of

*This article is excerpted from the results of this process "Education Equity: A Report on Indian/Native Education in Saskatchewan." Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission.

Indian ancestry graduating from the education system has been the same as the percentage of students of Indian ancestry who entered the system. They also asked if the percentage of students of Indian ancestry graduating from the system has been the same as the percentage of persons of Indian ancestry in society. If the answer to the last two questions is no, one is then in a position to say that the education system is not producing an equality of results insofar as persons of Indian ancestry are not graduating from the system in the proportionate representation that might be expected. The causes of this disparity of results may be numerous and may encompass all aspects of our society. However, in attempting to address this disparity, it is essential to look first to the education system itself to ascertain whether any barriers have been unwittingly built into that system which may be contributing to the inequality of results.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The fact that many social traditions have had an adverse impact on whole groups of people, the fact that these traditions remain embedded in the normal operations of the education system and continue to have a discriminatory effect, clearly demonstrates the need for affirmative action if these groups are to enjoy in fact the equality which the law promises.

There are two basic reasons for the development of affirmative action programs. First many education systems, through their normal operations have inadvertent discriminatory effects, and they therefore perpetuate historical patterns of disadvantage for racial minorities. The fact that these discriminatory effects are unintended and often result from seemingly neutral practices does not in any way lessen the need to identify these practices and alter them where that is possible.

Second, because of historical patterns of discrimination and disadvantage, some groups within our society are far behind and cannot compete on an equal footing for available opportunities in education.

In other words, for the groups that are disadvantaged there are two problems. Those that are already qualified

for different or better opportunities are often barred from them by systemic practices which have inadvertent discriminatory effects. And those that are not already qualified or eligible for different or better opportunities need extra assistance to overcome the historical patterns of discrimination and disadvantage that have been placed in their path.

To address these two problems, affirmative action programs have two major components: the elimination of systemic practices which act as barriers, and the establishment of special measures within education systems to assist disadvantaged groups to overcome the effects of past practices.

Instituting either one of these components without the other will not be sufficient. The elimination of systemic barriers will bring neutrality to education systems but simply neutrality is not enough. Certainly the elimination of these barriers will assist those individuals in the disadvantaged groups in taking advantage of previously unavailable opportunities. However, such a situation will not help those who are not qualified because of the disadvantage they have experienced.

On the other hand, providing special measures to assist the members of disadvantaged groups will not in and of itself eliminate systemic practices which act as barriers. If these barriers are not eliminated, the same exclusionary factors will be in place when the special measures are dropped. Consequently, both components are necessary for effective affirmative action programs.

'Systemic barriers' have been defined as those practices or procedures which are normal and look neutral but which have discriminatory or exclusionary effects. An example in the field of education is the sex stereotyping of occupations in schoolbooks and course materials and the lack of role models in fields or positions which are not traditional to the child's sex. The effect of these indirect practices has been the continued streaming of boys and girls into those disciplines and occupations that are traditional to their sex.

Affirmative action programs are designed to identify and remove these kinds of inadvertent and systemic practices. They function to identify

needs and create those special measures which will speed access to opportunities for members of disadvantaged groups. Goals and timetables provide a planning and measuring structure.

EQUAL BENEFIT

Equal benefit means that persons of a group or class are not only given equal opportunity to enter into a system, but that in addition, the system or institution will be examined to determine whether the minority group has achieved the expected proportionate representation. This approach concentrates on determining whether the results are fair. Based upon graduation rates and drop-out rates of person of Indian ancestry, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission concluded that "there can be absolutely no doubt that persons of Indian ancestry are not receiving equal benefits from the education system. . . . the disparity in benefits to persons of Indian ancestry from our education system is tantamount to a crisis."

EDUCATION EQUITY

In response to this crisis the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission developed the following affirmative action plan, which, in acknowledging the semantic problems many have with that phrase, they called "Education Equity":

- I. Every school board in the Province of Saskatchewan whose enrollment of students of Indian ancestry exceeds 5% should immediately apply for approval, pursuant to Section 47 of *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*. The Commission would consider reasonable, a plan of action for education equity which would have as its components the following:
 1. A statement of the number of students of Indian ancestry enrolled with the Board of Education at the time of the application for approval;
 2. A plan to hire over the next ten years, qualified teachers of Indian ancestry so that at the end of the ten year period the percentage of teachers of Indian ancestry employed by the Board of Education

will equal the percentage of students of Indian ancestry enrolled in the school division, or will equal 9.6% of the teaching staff or will equal a percentage of the teaching staff to be approved by the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission;

3. A plan by the Board of Education to annually, over the ten year period, fill a percentage of its vacancies of teaching positions with qualified teachers of Indian ancestry equal to the percentage of students of Indian ancestry enrolled in the school division or 9.6% of the vacancies in teaching positions for that year, or a percentage of vacancies in teaching positions for that year to be approved by the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission;
4. A plan to review its recruiting and hiring practices to determine whether such practices have any barriers to the recruitment or hiring of teachers of Indian ancestry within five years from the approval of the program;
5. A plan to actively recruit teachers of Indian ancestry from the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Regina, and other teacher training programs;
6. A commitment that it will work closely with teachers employed by it, in designing and implementing "education equity" and establish a joint committee of representatives from both the administration and the teachers' associations in the division to design and implement such a program;
7. A plan to provide cross-cultural training on a regular basis for the teachers employed by it;
8. A plan to increase and improve the participation of parents of Indian ancestry in the school system.

II. The Department of Education should:

1. Make available the financial resources from the education Development Fund required by the Boards of Education to implement a program of education equity;
2. Implement the recommendations

contained in the "Directions" report and the "Five Year Action Plan for Native Curriculum Development";

3. Continue to fund and, where possible, increase funding to programs established for the training of qualified teachers of persons of Indian ancestry;
4. Develop policies, guidelines, and funding for alternate forms of education, including alternate programs for students of Indian ancestry, provided students of Indian ancestry have freedom of choice to enter or leave the alternate program and return to, or stay in, the regular school system.

III. Parents of Indian ancestry should:

1. Actively seek positions on Boards of Education;
2. Where they reside on reserves, utilize the provisions of the *Education Act* to have their reserve designated as sub-divisions (Section 27 (2) (b) or have a trustee appointed to the district board of trustees (124(1.1)).

IV. The Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission will promote and encourage Boards of Education in the Province of Saskatchewan to voluntarily develop programs for education equity, but if a Board of Education has not applied for approval for its program of education equity by the 1st day of December, 1986, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission will consider applications under Section 47 of *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*, requesting it to order a program of education equity. Under Section 47 of the code, any person can make an application requesting the Commission to order a program. If such an application is made, the Commission, in exercising its discretion to order a program under section 47 of the Code, will consider, among other things, the following:

1. The percentage of parents of Indian ancestry resident in the School Division who support the application;
2. The percentage of non-native parents in the School Division

who support the application;

3. The percentage of teachers employed in the School Division who support the application;
4. The number of individual school trustees on the Board of Education who support the application;
5. The number of interested organizations operating in the School Division that support the application;
6. The percentage of students of Indian ancestry enrolled in the School Division;
7. The percentage of teachers of Indian ancestry employed in the School Division;
8. The initiatives already undertaken by the Board of Education to implement education equity.

From Equality of Opportunity to Equality of Results

E. N. McKeown

The following article is excerpted from the annual "State of the System" remarks given by Dr. McKeown, the Toronto Board's Director of Education on September 3, 1987. In his comments, Dr. McKeown called on senior staff to develop action plans for their Divisions and Departments. These plans, he said, should be S.M.A.R.T. That is, specific, measurable and manageable, appropriate, realistic and timebound.

Working to support and *live* our race relations policy in everyday practice must continue to be our goal as a system. Achievement of this goal requires committed action on the part of all of us, immediately and over the long term. For me, the work to realize this goal is not something in addition to, or apart from, everything else we do. Nor is it something for which only the Race Relations Advisor and the Curriculum Advisor on Race Relations and Multiculturalism are responsible. Living the policy in our daily practice means that all of us take it into conscious consideration in the decisions that we make in all areas of our work, be it curriculum, assessment and placement of students, reporting to parents, extra-curricular activities, delivery of support services, or selection and promotion.

I believe that the full implementation of the race relations policy in personnel matters goes hand in hand with the implementation of the policy in other areas. We must continue to emphasize excellence and ability as the most important criteria for selection and promotion. I firmly believe that there are people in every racial and ethnocultural group who meet these criteria. By giving them increased access to our workforce, we provide ourselves with a rich and diverse human resource, and that can only benefit us as we continue our commitment to making race relations an integral part of our everyday practice.

We are leaders in the province in

terms of the number of visible minorities that we employ in our system. In 1986, approximately 25% of the new teachers and 10% of the administrative staff we hired were from visible minority backgrounds. Close to 10% of the promotions for administrative staff in that year also went to visible minority employees. I am concerned, however, that our performance was not uniformly good across the Board. As a system committed to our Race Relations and Equal Opportunity policies, we cannot accept this situation. I have, therefore, decided to meet with the supervisory officers and administrative department heads to review the findings of the various workforce related studies that the Research staff has undertaken. I expect that following this review, these officials will meet with their own groups to develop their own plans of action that they will implement within a specific timeframe. The purpose of these action plans will be to achieve realistic and real improvements on our performance so far.

I realize that people need very specific skills and knowledge if they are to be held responsible for carrying out the race relations policy and I am committed to the continued availability of training programs needed by staff to do an effective job.

I believe that those of us who are in positions of leadership particularly need this kind of support.

There is no question but that ours is an ambitious policy. The review of our success in its implementation has

clearly shown that we have accomplished a great deal in many areas generally, and especially in respect to curriculum, in-service of staff and personnel practices. The information received from schools and administrative departments for the first annual Race Relations Assembly held on June 13 of last year reveals that an impressive range of activities is going on throughout the system.

A recent newspaper article said, "The Toronto Board is widely acknowledged as being at the forefront of fighting racism in schools". I believe that we can be proud of our record but we must continue to take every necessary step to ensure that the racial and ethnocultural diversity of our community is reflected right across the curriculum and throughout the entire system.

Anti-Racist Education

Carol Tator

Public perceptions have changed in recent years as a result of growing evidence that racial discrimination is systemic, and that it is deeply entrenched within the policies and practices of educational institutions. In 1977, Daniel Hill publicly declared in a report on Human rights in Canada, that racial discrimination is written on the daily agenda of every Black, Asian and native pupil (CLC, 1977). In 1980, the Attorney General of the Province of Ontario attempted to draw an important distinction between the issue of multiculturalism versus racism. In a public address he stated that: "cultural heritage is vital to the long term viability of our chosen society, but it cannot offer immediate solutions to, nor amelioration of the devastating consequences of the racism which lies amongst us."

In 1982, Moodley's research among minority parents in B.C. clearly showed, "that there is a preference for competence which overrides a concern for heritage." She stated, "while knowledge of other cultures is important for teachers . . . it is clearly less important than the concern about race issues and how racism permeates society and the school . . ." In a growing number of boards of education in the 80's, parents and spokespersons from community organizations argued eloquently that the fundamental issues at stake were not so much cultural as racial; not lifestyles but lifechances; not heritages but competence; not diversity but disparity; not prejudice but discrimination.

Few attempted to deny the importance and positive values of multicultural initiatives taken within some educational systems. However, as one parent stated in the foreword to the Toronto Board of Education's policy on race relations: "The issues facing the colour of my skin are more pressing than those facing my culture." Colour differences could no longer be ignored. A Quebec Human Rights

educator put it this way: "Pretending to be colour-blind in the face of the hardships encountered by Asian, Native and Black youngsters and professing not to perceive any difference in treatment, is still tantamount to sidestepping the problem." (Thornhill)

If then, racism is the malady, anti-racist education is the primary antidote. The concept of anti-racist education is one which has been widely accepted in Great Britain, the United States and New Zealand for more than a decade and more recently is gaining acceptance in Canada.

The goal of anti-racist education is to change institutional, organizational policies and practices which have a discriminatory impact; and to change individual behaviours and attitudes that reinforce racism. The primary thrust however is on behaviour and practice rather than perceptions and attitudes. Anti-racist education seeks to prepare all children to learn to live and work in a society where racial prejudice and discrimination has historically been a fact of life for visible minorities.

What are some of the critical areas of school life which race relations policies and a philosophy of anti-racist education are designed to tackle?

Curriculum

First, and perhaps foremost, is the development and implementation of an anti-racist, multicultural curriculum. Race relations policies should view curriculum as an inclusive term which encompasses all the experiences of the students for which the school is responsible. Curriculum therefore must reflect and respond to the needs and life experiences of students of all racial and ethnic backgrounds. It must provide opportunities through which students acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable them to realize their own potential. Curriculum within an anti-racist educational context enables students to deal with the diver-

sity of human ideas, achievement and experiences so they learn to value the thoughts and work and contributions of individuals and groups with an unprejudiced understanding. As Barbara Thomas suggests in an article in *Currents* (Vol. 2, No. 3):

"Anti-racist curriculum means searching out a broad range of literature, poetry, music, art, oral history and biographies; it means teaching children about how people have tried to change things which are wrong and unjust and nurturing a respect for the courage and skills it takes to do this.

"The process of learning should lead students to consider as a matter of course what biases and assumptions are reflected in the treatment of a topic, in terms of the questions that are asked, the range of perspectives brought to bear, the conclusions drawn and the questions which remain."

Within curriculum, issues which continue to arouse particular interest and concern include the recognition of heritage language and dialects as a legitimate communications system which should be taught within the school curriculum. Secondly, the cooperative role of the school working with staff, parents, and community to develop new curriculum materials and resources. Similarly, input from the community is viewed as a critical component in establishing the accuracy, authenticity and equity in the treatment of non-white and ethnic groups in textbooks and other learning materials. Having guidelines and procedures to monitor for bias and stereotyping in the depiction of groups' histories, cultures, achievements and experiences, is essential. In dealing with bias, it is important to stress the fact that it is a function of omission as well as commission; thus requiring the development of a curriculum that touches more broadly and sensitively emerging realities.

Based on the premise that anti-racist education should permeate the

