

know that there is a safe space where these discussions can take place, where educators can listen and hear their views. Before harmful language enters learning spaces through literature, text or learning about history, it is best to coach and have disclaimers that the class may be covering some information that may be sensitive to others and to give those students affected the opportunity to know that they can step away if needed. Also discussed were the processes before harmful text enters the classroom or curriculum and what can be done to ensure that these Board aligned lists comply and are in line with Catholic virtues and values. There is a booklist by parents of Black children where recommendations can continuously be made. These books can be reviewed to hopefully be added to the Board approved list of texts for schools. The group felt that it is important that the inclusion of Black history be incorporated throughout the year as part of the curriculum.

Looking at areas of STEM, having Black speakers would be valuable as these are spaces that are sometimes under represented. There is a strong presence that some may not be aware of and it would great for students to be exposed to those speakers within STEM. Hopefully students will be encouraged and influenced to explore these areas.

Max Vecchiarino clarified that the Board has been very explicit that an incident that involves a racial slur, racism or microaggression is always addressed and investigated. Depending on the specific circumstances, action is taken up to and including dealing with them at the highest level which would be to refer matters to the Employee Relations Department. It seems to be working as there is an increased number of incidents being reported and reviewed. Michelle Coutinho added that there is also an Online Reporting Tool on every school website that is active and being refreshed. This tool provides students an opportunity to report somethrtuol

d. Catholic Equity Leads

Nancy Cargioli advised that the Catholic Equity Lead has been a standing role amongst educators within the Board for over five years and the purpose of the role is to support in building capacity using an anti-oppressive framework. The focus for the last two years has been to address Anti-Black Racism. Each school within DPCDSB has at least one lead. They are called to attend professional development workshops led through the Equity Department. The Program Department has been included this year as well as an invitation to other members. This year the workshops are led by Dr. Nicole West-Burns and the focus is a five part series on Racial Literacy and Addressing Anti-Black Racism. Two of the five workshops have been completed. The first one was titled What is Racial Literacy? How Might I Build Mine, the second was Confronting Anti-Black Racism, The N Word, Stereotypes and Dominant Narratives, the third is Curricular Violence, the fourth is Addressing Deficit Perspectives: Funds of Knowledge and Cultural Capital and the fifth is Cultivating Intellect for Black Students: Extending the Bounds of Relevance. Once the leads have completed the professional development, they bring it back to disseminate it within their school communities and lead initiatives. Following each session, members from the Equity Department will hold a follow up learning table series to support larger conversations on unpacking understandings from the workshops.

7. Mental Health and Well-Being Plan

Paula Callender and Shenelle Bernier work in the Well-Being Department under the leadership of Lucy Papaloni, Superintendent of Special Education and Learning Services. A PowerPoint on

from the student groups they interact with. They work with Anti-Black Racism Forums and connections to the Graduation Coaches for Black Students, Student Senate and 2SLGBTQ+ Allies Club and BSA's in Secondary Schools. They also just created a grant called the Elementary Well-Being Grant where students can form groups in which they try to spread mental health and well-being awareness in their schools. To receive the grant, they have to be equity focused, have help seeking resources, and show they were working with Support Services staff and educators. A Student Voice video was shared titled A Message from the 2022-2023 DPCDSB Student Mental Health and Well-Being Champions.

A discussion ensued.

Michelle Coutinho advised that every school has help seeking posters to inform students of the names of people in their school they could speak to if they needed someone to talk to. They have been placed in bathroom stalls to provide privacy for students.

8. Black History Month 2023

Jaclynn Deveaux-Matthews shared that this year in the Equitable and Inclusive Education Department, there has been an intentional focus on Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP). The department has worked to curate a collection of identity affirming texts for elementary schools. The work is to foster an understand of how educators can transform educational spaces into places that allow space for historically excluded systems of knowledge and invite in the many different ways of