

■ NEWS

EQUITY ACTION PLAN DEVELOPED BY PUBLIC BOARD

KATHY YANCHUS kyanchus@metroland.com

There is no more important work going forward for the Halton District School Board than the implementation of a human rights equity action plan, according to the director of education.

At the Dec. 2 regular meeting of the board, The Way Forward document was revealed, reflecting the board's "commitment to create and maintain safe, inclusive learning and working environments, free from discrimination for students, families, staff and members of the public."

"We have had for many years students in our board, students in our society who have been not included, left out and perhaps even overtly excluded, and it's absolutely time that this was addressed, fixed and resolved, said Stuart Miller, who

thanked the equity department leadership team for the report, as well as parents and students "who have confronted us with the reality of students not being successful because of who they are as opposed to what they're able to accomplish."

The Way Forward contains four areas of focus: classroom instruction, school and workplace practices; leadership, governance and human resources; data collection, integration and reporting; organizational culture change.

Strategies will focus on everything from inclusive and culturally responsible teaching, to addressing suspension and expulsion data to identify systemic disparities, stated the report.

There will also be more diversity in leadership hiring as well as professional development focused on equity, inclusion and human rights.

The document includes specific procedures and accountability measures which will be monitored on a regular basis.

Over the past several months, a draft version of the plan was shown to a variety of stakeholders both within and outside the board, including school administrators, the student senate and the HDSB Indigenous and Racialized Educators Network.

"We look forward to updates on how things are going. It is one of the most important things that we are doing," said Andrea Grebenc, HDSB chair.

