



***Hamilton - Wentworth***

**Family Action Council**

DEDICATED TO PRESERVING FAMILY VALUES

BOX 105, BINBROOK, ONTARIO

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## **Meeting Minutes**

### **HWDSB DISCUSSIONS REGARDING EQUITY\ANTIRACISM POLICY SUPPORTING GUIDELINES**

**Date:** November 1, 2004 (Meeting #2)

**Time:** 8:00 a.m.

**Place:** HWDSB Room 3 - 1st Flr.

**Present:**

Bill Torrens, Consultant	>	HWDSB
Chuck Reid, Superintendent	>	HWDSB
Trustee Davidson	>	HWDSB
Trustee Orban	>	HWDSB
Steve Whyte, Pastor	>	Paramount Alliance Church
Gord Norman, Pastor	>	King's View Community Church
Raj Sandhu, Pastor	>	Meadowcreek Community Church
Jim Enos, Vice-President	>	Hamilton-Wentworth Family Action Council
Gloria Turner, Research Director	>	Hamilton-Wentworth Family Action Council

**Objective:** To continue discussions regarding concerns with the draft Equity\Antiracism Supporting Guidelines of the HWDSB Equity Policy, specifically a number of re-definitions and to establish the goal of these redefinitions. Also to understand the term 'unlearning process'.

#### **Jim Enos**

- Provided an overview of the first of such meetings held on June 9, 2004 and handed out minutes of that same meeting.
- Mentioned that superintendent Reid had made it clear that the community groups, which had been selectively invited by HWDSB, were from various cultural and ethnic groups and were not from faith groups.
- Reminded that the excluding of faith groups was of great concern with HWFAC.
- Spoke regarding HWFAC's concern with re-definition of many key words found in the glossary and the fact that the definitions do not align with the Miriam -Webster's Collegiate Dictionary or with the Ministry of Education glossary.
- Reminded that only the re-definition of race had been discussed and that numerous additional re-definitions of concern had since been forwarded to Sup't Reid by HWFAC and was entitled '*Appendix A - Comparative Glossary Terms and Comments*'.

- HWFAC was hoping to learn how concerns had been received by the Equity Policy Steering Committee and what their response had been.

**Bill Torrens**

- Distributed copies of the draft updated glossary.

**Jim Enos**

- HWFAC will review this draft-updated glossary and provide comments in the near future.

**Trustee Davidson**

- Asked if the current document is draft or policy.

**Superintendent Reid**

- There are two portions to the document, the Equity Policy is now policy; the Supporting Guidelines Equity Policy Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity portion is not policy at this time and may be revised by the Equity Policy Steering Committee.

**Trustee Orban**

- Expressed the need to have all stakeholder communities consulted regarding the re-definitions including the faith communities and asked if this had been done.

**Superintendent Reid**

- This has not been done as it is too much effort.

**Trustee Orban**

- Posed question to Sup't Reid as to whether the re-definitions had been submitted to Miriam-Webster for their review.

**Superintendent Reid**

- This did not happen.

**Trustee Orban**

- Posed question to Sup't Reid as to whether the re-definitions had been submitted to other boards and to the Ministry of Education.

**Superintendent Reid**

- They had not been. HWDSB did look at 2 other school board examples, Toronto and Peel.

### **Trustee Orban**

- Expressed concern that this committee is re-defining key words with limited community consultation, Ministry of Education approval or dictionary authority review or consultation.

### **Bill Torrens**

- Advised that more re-definitions are upcoming to be added to the glossary.

### **Superintendent Reid**

- Reiterated that the community for the Antiracism portion of the Equity Policy was and is restricted to the various cultural communities and did not and will not include faith communities.

### **Reverend Norman**

- Expressed concern that in the mind of HWDSB, the faith community was not and is not considered to be one of the cultural communities, as the practice of their faith is precisely what defines the culture of the faith community.

### **Superintendent Reid**

- The Policy Working Committee is a committee of which Judith Bishop is chair. It is this committee which determines who is consulted from the community.
- HWFAC must apply to the Policy Working Committee to request permission to participate in the validation process.
- Made it clear that he could not make a commitment that in fact HWFAC would be permitted to participate but that he would commit to listen to and consider our input.
- (Note: This is contrary to an e-mail correspondence to HWFAC from Superintendent Reid dated February 13, 2004 which read, "*Jim, you still have a great deal of opportunity for input. The anti-racism piece of the guideline is a small portion of the document. I will keep my commitment to your group that they will have an opportunity to respond as other 'draft' elements are created. Once again, this will be through the validation process.*")

### **Jim Enos**

- Posed the question, Will communities who do not support same-gender unions be declared racist by the HWDSB and their children unlearned in their spiritual truths?

### **Superintendent Reid**

- Failed to answer question.

### **Jim Enos**

- Noted that the revised Equity Policy Glossary in fact includes religion as one of the cultural identities and therefore must be invited to participate in this process.

## **Superintendent Reid**

- HWDSB will not go back and undo work to date and will not invite faith groups to participate in the Antiracism portion of the Equity Policy.

## **Jim Enos**

- Reminded Sup't Reid of Trustee Johnstone's expressed concern with the Equity Committee's concept of community consultation. HWFAC shares that concern and is not accepting of the selective invitation process that was used to establish participants who shared in the forming of the antiracism guidelines. Selective invitation by HWDSB of groups with whom they feel will be supportive while intentionally excluding groups who may not be supportive is not community consultation.

## **Superintendent Reid**

- HWDSB cannot consult the entire community to participate in every HWDSB policy.
- Provided example of policy for filing documents which would not require entire community input.

## **Jim Enos**

- The Antiracism Guidelines of the Equity Policy with its re-definitions does touch the entire community and thus the entire community must be consulted.
- Reminded Sup't Reid that HWDSB audit, when addressing public consultation under bullet 5 stated, "*Develop outreach programs to neighbourhoods, churches and community organizations to distribute information and gain feedback about issues affecting families.*"
- As churches are specifically named, then HWDSB is obligated to invite churches and agencies representing churches to participate in the Antiracism Guidelines as it clearly affects families
- Reminded Sup't Reid that the purpose of the audit was to enable HWDSB to become transparent and accountable.

## **Superintendent Reid**

- The audit was created after the formation of the Equity Committee and so does not apply in this case.

## **Reverend Norman**

- As a grandparent is determined to defend the spiritual truths of the Christian heritage and will fight with all his strength to see that spiritual truths remain intact in public education.

## **Reverend Whyte**

- Agreed with Reverend Norman's concerns and also wants to ensure that spiritual truths are not undermined in public education.