

Exemplary Strategies/Programs/Practices to Support Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Human Rights in School Boards



ONTARIO PUBLIC
SCHOOL BOARDS'
ASSOCIATION

Leading Education's Advocates

School Board: Peel District School Board (PDSB)

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Name of Program/Initiative/Strategy: PDSB Consent Culture

Hyperlinks to Documents or Website(s) Describing this Program/Initiative/Strategy:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1pw9QI0XOcYuTEPgZ20A3tS6VjbEnN1nxV3cXzst6-TI/edit?usp=sharing>

Description of Program/Initiative/Strategy (max 200 words)

The focus is on exemplary strategies/programs that increase student confidence, achievement, engagement and retention and reduce systemic barriers. In the brief description below please provide answers to the following questions: Where the program/initiative/strategy is delivered (school/board locations)? Who is responsible for delivering and monitoring the program/initiative/strategy? Who is the target audience? Are there any community partnerships involved? Are there any staffing or budget implications? Are there any special resources required? What are your indicators of success, etc.?

Where the program/initiative/strategy is delivered (school/board locations)?

PDSB Consent Culture is a centrally-created comprehensive plan that has been developed with students for students. Our vision for the plan is to decrease/eliminate the incidents of sexual violence in our schools, therefore it is paramount that it lands with students and has positive impacts on their lives. This is why the plan was created *with* students and not *for* them. The PDSB Consent Culture initiative has been happening at the central-level through the work of our Student Walkout Committee (secondary students, parents, community members, Administrators, Social Workers, Psychologists and our Student Trustees) and it has been carried into our schools with the assistance of our PDSB Consent Culture team. The team visits schools to educate and build the capacity of our staff so that they can lead the work and empower students to be advocates in bringing awareness to the prevalence of sexual violence in our schools.

Who is responsible for delivering and monitoring the program/initiative/strategy?

Our PDSB Consent Culture team is responsible for delivering and monitoring the program. Co-leading the project are three staff members from the Safe and Caring Schools Department. Social Workers, Katie Green and Jana Venditti and Coordinating Principal, Terilyn Phipps. We work actively with students and school staff, both proactively and reactively, to embed consent education into school success plans to teach students about consent, healthy relationships, boundaries and toxic masculinity. We also know the value and importance of hearing student voices and having them demonstrate their advocacy with this initiative through leading Consent Culture groups in their schools.

Who is the target audience?

1. **Students** are central to this project. Their activism and leadership is commendable. They are social justice advocates and have taught us all a lesson. They have taught us that we have a lot of learning and unlearning still to do. We need to name and acknowledge the hurt and harm that we, as adults, have caused both historically and currently, before we can move forward. Students have called out our past practices when handling disclosures of sexual violence, as oppressive and not trauma informed. They have held us accountable. With our [4-Pillar Comprehensive Plan](#) in Peel, we now have a framework to draw on so that we don't make these mistakes again. Our vision is to ensure student safety (emotional and physical) and wellness. We are working hard with our students to cultivate a world free from sexual violence that is based on respect, consent and care. We will continue to work together to ensure our school communities are places where every student feels safe and valued. Sexual harassment and sexual violence are serious and sensitive matters. The Peel District School Board is taking action to address them. We investigate every report that students bring to us and we are doing this with care, consideration and compassion.

2. It is important that **staff** are equipped to address student disclosures of sexual violence that come their way. This is why we have created the [School Guidance document for Administrators](#) to support student safety, decision-making and duties to report. It is also important that staff build learning spaces that promote the understanding of consent in building healthy relationships with their peers. Normalizing classroom conversations about consent-based interactions and healthy sexuality is key. This includes consent beyond sexual consent and can include consent to post images on social media and consent to any form of touch (e.g., hugging).

In an effort to collaborate across our system at PDSB, the Consent Culture team has been working actively to engage with, seek feedback and collaborate with other departments in our internal system. This has included the PDSB Curriculum department, where discussions have focused on understanding the elements of consent, healthy relationships, and healthy sexuality present in the curriculum. Strategies for educators to increase knowledge and understanding in these areas for students, beyond the discussions in health class and physical education have been discussed. Expanding these discussions can be beneficial in promoting and creating a broader culture of consent for school communities. Additionally, the Consent Culture team has been collaborating with the PDSB Empowering Modern Learners department to promote education and understanding of consent and digital citizenship.

3. **Parent/caregiver partnerships** are pivotal to PDSB's Consent Culture plan. Our team has presented to and is actively working with the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC), which is a

central group of parents/caregivers that brings issues forward from their school communities. PIC is responsible for:

- supporting, encouraging, and enhancing meaningful parental involvement within schools and across the district
- seeking advice and ideas of school councils and other parents and partners as they plan and implement strategies to involve more parents at the regional level
- working collaboratively with the school board
- developing strategies for increasing parental engagement and outreach, including parents who find involvement more challenging.

The PDSB Consent Culture team and Student Walkout Committee has worked together with PIC to bring awareness to this cause, learn/unlearn together and to create necessary action plans. As a result of this collaboration, PIC members are bringing this back to their school communities to create student-led Consent Culture groups and promote the awareness of the initiative.

Are there any community partnerships involved?

- The PDSB has partnered with **Farrah Khan**, who leads the “**Consent Comes First**” office at Toronto Metropolitan University and is a consultant, educator and advocate for students against sexual violence. Farrah has been working with the Consent Culture Team as well as other board staff, parents, and students to promote and collaborate on this initiative.
- The PDSB Consent Culture team has partnered with **Peel Children’s Aid Society** in an effort to align our practices and understanding of reporting obligations in the best interests of our students. We have met and discussed some elements of PDSB’s new procedure as well as to review scenarios that arise often and where it may be complex to determine next steps.
- **Hope 24/7** is a non-profit organization that provides support services to survivors of relationship and sexual violence. This organization has completed a workshop for the Parent Involvement Committee to provide education and promote understanding of consent, supporting youth impacted by sexual violence and resources for the PDSB parent community. Students who are 12 years old and older and who are impacted by sexual violence can receive crisis and counselling supports from this organization.
- **EveryMind** is a non-profit children’s mental health organization. One of the programs that EveryMind offers is called the Trauma and Abuse Treatment Program (TATP). This has been a resource that is shared with students and families as a reactive strategy to support access to counselling support following incidents of sexual violence in addition to other community resources.

What has been the impact on student learning, retention and engagement? Please share any data to support impact. (max 200 words)

1. As we are only seven months into our work, we have limited data at this time to show impact. However, we are confident that because our plan has been co-created with students, that its successes are already being felt system wide. Please view the following video which captures student voices. In the video are our Student Trustees, Deepanwita Sen, Grade 12 student at Turner Fenton SS (Student Trustee for the North) and Selena Zhou, Grade 12 student at Glenforest SS (Student Trustee for the South) as well as Grade 11 students from Applewood Heights SS, Cyriah Grange, Vivienne Strafas, and Gioia Squillaciotti.

The PDSB Student Trustee video can be viewed [here](#).

The Applewood Heights Secondary School student's video can be viewed [here](#).

2. With the launch of our Online Support Reporting Form, we will be able to gather data on the types of incidents that are occurring and how our schools and school staff are supporting students through these experiences. The Online Support Reporting Form will be launched in the coming weeks.

3. The impacts of our PDSB Comprehensive Plan are nationwide. On April 25, 2022, Teralyn Phipps was live and on the air on CBC's The Current with Matt Galloway to speak about sexual violence in schools.

The recording can be found [here](#).

On the show, Teralyn spoke with a 17-year old secondary student and Farrah Khan about the prevasiveness of sexual violence in schools, what the students are doing about it through the [High School Too](#) movement and how the Peel District School Board is taking action.

Since April 25th, Teralyn and the PDSB Consent Culture team have been approached by various groups to share and present PDSB's Plan. The team spoke to the PEI's Woman's Secretariat Task Force working to develop a coordinated response to adult sexual violence. The PDSB Consent Culture team also spoke to legal counsel from British Columbia, a lawyer wanting us to share our procedures and protocols so that she could bring it forward to her Minister of Education to change procedure in her school district. This summer, the PDSB Consent Culture team, Teralyn, Katie and Jana will be traveling to Saskatoon to present at their [National Trustee Gathering on Indigenous Education & CSBA Congress Conference](#) where we will share our comprehensive plan with attendees.

National Trustee Gathering on Indigenous Education & CSBA Congress Conference
[\(PDSB Consent Culture Slide Deck\)](#)