

# Challenge (In)Equity!

Re-affirming Our Vocation to  
Catholic Education  
And Commitment  
to the Service of Students

# Brief Outline

- \* Part One: Establish a Relationship
- \* Part Two: Background Rationale for the Equity Strategy/Inclusive Education Policies
- \* Part Three: Implementation Strategies

# Our Gospel Values..

- \*Are intrinsically infused with ALL the concepts as outlined in the Equity Strategy and the updated version of PPM 119.

\*Honour the Aboriginal peoples who lived here before us and still exist within and around our communities

# You are all assessing me right now

- \* In forty-five seconds determine my:
- \* Age
- \* Ethno-cultural background
- \* Country of Birth
- \* Sexual orientation
- \* Marital status
- \* Faith

Adults determine gender and ethnicity  
in the first four seconds of a human  
encounter.

We are biologically hardwired to make  
snap assessments: evolutionary  
survival mechanism

Navdeep Bains story

# Why Are All the Taxi Drivers...?

(1) One day while Dakota was watching T.V.,

- \* she suddenly jumped and said, " Hey Mommy,
- \* why are all the taxi drivers brown?"

(2 )And her mother thought about the question and frowned...

- \* and she was about to reply....
- \* (3) but Dakota interrupted her and said,

- \* "why is it always a certain suspect
- \* that the guy on the news is looking for

- \* Mom, I've started noticing it more and more

- \* (4) And her mother thought about the questions she couldn't ignore
- \* and she was about to reply..

- \*

(5) But Dakota interrupted her and said:

\* Are people treated differently 'cause of the

\* colour of their skin,

\* Or whether they are tall or short or large or thin

\*

\* (6) And why aren't there more couples, like daddy and you,

\* on the TV shows and commercials we view

\* Where the daddy is brown and the mommy is white

\* And the children they love are a beautiful sight

\*

\* (7) And her mother realized it was gonna be a long night..

\* ....and she was about to reply.

\* And...and why is the leader of the country always a man?

\* I thought you said women could do anything they can.



- \* (9) And where are the wonderful people
- \* in wheelchairs?
- \* How come I hardly see them anywhere
- \* Working in the banks and stores that we go to
- \* Aren't persons with disabilities part of the community too?
- \*

- \* (10) And Dakota's mommy heaved a few sighs
- \* Because the answers were complex to all of these "why's"

But this is what she said:

- \* "Dakota bear, the points that you make are only partially true
- \* 'cause the world's slowly changing but we've got work to do
- \*

- \* (11) Every judgment we make about the people we see

- \* has to include that they are unique

- \* No matter their size or the faith they believe in,

- \* Or where they were born or the colour of their skin

- \*

- \* (12) We have to believe every person on earth

- \* is a gift to behold and has incredible worth

and they have the chance to achieve anything they desire,

- \* whether it's driving a taxi or putting out fires."

- \*

- \*

I believe we all share a  
passion for Social Justice  
(fostered by Catholic  
Education)

Your passion for Social  
Justice will come from  
personal history and/or  
experiences

I do this work because I want my children and every other child to grow up in a world where they will never experience the racism that I and others have.

More importantly:

They must always feel "VALUED"

# Educators Must:

- Constantly challenge the status quo.
- Examine the potential resistance.
- Update our knowledge around current trends and issues.
- Network with other activists.

# Equity Summit Group

- \* Now 26 school boards across the province in conjunction with AMENO
- \* Dialogue with the Ministry of Education
- \* As Chair I was invited to help write the Equity Strategy released last April
- \* Ministry has also created an Inclusive Schooling Branch

# Clarification/Allies

Allies come in ALL forms! Especially white people.

- \* I have learned that forging alliances with like minded thinkers is lucrative and strategic

# bell hooks

- \* " Since I believe wholeheartedly that white people can choose to be anti-racist, I look for those individuals in every walk of life who have made this choice."
- \* "People of Colour (must) fully embrace the reality that white people, who choose to do so, can be anti-racist to the core of their being."



# Part Two

\* So why an Equity Strategy and New PPM?

# Brief History of the Equity Strategy

- \* Safe Schools Act: Harris
- \* Bill 212 Amendment to the Schools Act
- \* Equity Strategy "Realizing Ontario's Promise of Diversity"
- \* New and Improved PPM 119

# The Code

- \* Every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to services, goods and facilities, without discrimination because of Race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, Creed, sex, age, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or handicap.

\* The Ontario Human Rights Commission initiated a formal complaint against the Ministry of Education and the TDSB to seek a systemic resolution of the issues. In a November 2005 settlement, the TDSB accepted and acknowledged the widespread perception of the discriminatory effect of the application of current school disciplinary legislation and policies and agreed to measures to address the concerns raised.

## Bill 212

- \*Is the amendment to the Safe Schools Act and the resolution to the complaint filed against the Ministry of Education.
- \*Took effect on February 1<sup>st</sup> 2008

# Bill 212

- \* Administrators must look at mitigating factors before suspending or expelling

Revise Suspension and Expulsion Protocols

Develop program for long-term suspension

Develop Progressive Discipline Policy

Develop Bullying Prevention Policy

# Equity Strategy

- \*The Minister of Education's mandate to go beyond Bill 212 to create truly inclusive school systems

# Brief History of the Current Reality



# Immigration

- \* In the 1950s, 84.6% of immigrants were European by birth
- \* By the mid 1980s immigrants born in Europe slipped to 28.6 %
- \* Now it is about 15%



# In the past 20 years

- \* We have moved from a Judeo-Christian, Eurocentric demographic of immigrants to:
- \* Multi-Faith groups from Latin and South America, Africa and the Asian Continent
- \* Hence a focus on Faith Accommodation in the New PPM

- By 2017 non-whites will outnumber the white population in most major cities in Canada

Immigration patterns have changed

- 290,000 a year: 80% are non-white
- 75% of them settle in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal

# Socio-Economic Reality

- \*In 1985 the top 10% of households made 30x the bottom 10%.
- \*Today it is 85x greater.
- \*Ipod story

# LGBTQQIAA

- \* Lesbian
- \* Gay
- \* Bi-sexual
- \* Transsexual
- \* Transgendered
- \* Two-spirited
- \* Queer
- \* Questioning
- \* Inter-sex
- Asexual
- Ally

# Heterosexism

The assumption that everyone is or should be heterosexual and that heterosexuality is the only normal, natural sexual orientation.

# Homophobia

Also biphobia/transphobia

The fear and hatred of homosexuals/  
bisexuals/transpeople, and those  
perceived to be, often exhibited as  
prejudice, discrimination,  
harassment and violence.

# Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops 2007

- \* Racism, religious intolerance, homophobia, and gender-based violence are still evident in our communities and- unfortunately- in our schools.
- \* In 2007, the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops noted that suicide rates among homosexual students were higher than among their heterosexual peers and called for positive action, reinforcing its earlier statement that, "the right of each student to be free of harassment, violence or malice in speech or action is unequivocal and schools carry the clear obligation to provide a positive school environment for ALL students and



# All about Power

- Everyone in this room has experienced marginalization regardless of one's potential access to power
- What we do with our power, when we occupy those spaces, defines us as humans/practitioners

# Power

- \* Teachers possess a great deal of power.
- \* We can empower or destroy a child with a single glance
- \* Teach my teachers that our primary role is to create self-esteem
- \* Education is not about us...but them

# XENOPHOBIA

\*Is it ethical to believe existing stereotypes that still prevail around "difference"?

# Part Three

## \*Inclusive Education Practices

# Three Priorities of the Strategy

1. Shared and Committed Leadership: boards and schools will play a critical role in eliminating discrimination through the identification and removal of bias and barriers. Achieving equity is a shared responsibility.

- \* 2. Equity and inclusive education policies and practices will support positive learning environments so that all students can feel engaged in and empowered by what they are learning, supported by teachers and staff from who they are learning from.

- \* 3. Accountability and transparency will be demonstrated through the use of clear measures of success (based on established indicators) and through communication to the public of our progress towards achieving equity for all students.

# Four Year Implementation Plan

- \* 2009-2010 School boards will:
- \* Develop or revise policies on equity and inclusive education for implementation by September 2010
- \* Review existing community partnerships
- \* Have religious accommodation guidelines in place
- \* Put procedures in place that will enable students and staff to report incidents of discrimination



# Eradicate Discrimination By:

- \* Highlighting what we have in common and showcasing what we have that is unique.
- \* Food and Festival days: Drill down deeper than just the exploration of food. All cultures have some sort of fried dough. Discuss the evolution of the cuisine.
- \* Artichoke example

# Understand:

- \* The difference between Equality and Equity

# Curriculum

- \*English ISU example
- \*Grade 11 Art example

# African Proverb

“The story of the hunt will never be told completely until the lion provides his/her version”

Inclusive Curriculum must include the students  
“Story”.

# Visuals

# Visuals



# Multi-Faith Community

- Even though people in our community practice different faiths we share four things in common:
  - 1. Loved/respected
  - 2. Healthy
  - 3. Successful
  - 4. Belief in a Karmic Principle
- Our Karmic principle is "Do unto others and you would have others do unto you".

# Separate System

- \* No doubt that Catholic Education will be attacked again
- \* We must be able to defend our autonomy and what separates us from secular boards
- \* We can demonstrate that our system is intrinsically inclusive because of our Gospel Values
- \* EVEN if it attracts students from other faith groups



# "Dysconscious" Racism

- \* Public Education systems have reinforced a Euro-centric pedagogy while omitting the contributions of other cultures to modern society.
- \* Dr. Joyce-King
- \* Teacher told her students that African slaves should have been thankful that they had jobs and a roof over their heads.
- \* Dr. King: Education has created a dysfunctional understanding of race/culture