

**NANAIMO LADYSMITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
INFORMATION SHEET**

DATE: September 28, 2022
TO: Board of Education
FROM: Shawn Johnston, Executive Director, Human Resources
SUBJECT: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Framework - Update

Background

Direction was given by the Board for the Executive Director, Human Resources to develop and implement an EDI framework for the district. A request for proposals (RFP) for vendors to work with the District to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives was issued. Specifically, the RFP sought vendors to work with the District to develop and implement a sustainable EDI framework, including a review of district policies and procedures, development of an EDI action plan, and development and deliver training and educational plans such as: Indigenous relations, unconscious bias, anti-racism, and LGBTQ2S+ inclusion.

Most of the proposals received were deficient in providing any evidence that the vendors had researched the district, and most sought to provide their services entirely remotely. Significantly, most proposals failed to sufficiently address work with our Indigenous partners as part of EDI work. Additionally, many proposals were overly expensive with a limited scope of work.

The proposal from Chanelle Tye Equity & Inclusion was chosen as the successful proposal. This proposal stood out as having a better understanding of the district, providing in person consultation, and offering to tailor the scope of work to the district's needs. Chanelle Tye EDI is a small company comprised of Chanelle and Victoria Hai Quynh Lam, based out of Vancouver. This proposal also provided evidence that while Chanelle is running a business, her passion is working with organizations to advance this work in meaningful ways in our society.

Following selection of the vendor, the district senior leadership team discussed internal resources that could be utilized in this work. Stephanie Johnson was identified as having the capability and capacity to assist on this project.

Stephanie and myself have met and produced a draft framework for this work. Further meetings are set with Stephanie and with Chanelle for the week of September 29, 2022, to continue the work.

Discussion

The draft framework proposes to utilize the Syeyutsus framework to support the district's Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) work. It is focused on the 2022/23 school year and has the following elements:

1. Conduct a JEDI audit of the district.

This work will be led by Chanelle's team and start with touch-point meetings with key district staff to identify the district's goals, the "change makers" within the system and community. Chanelle will then lead an environmental scan of the district which will include an anonymous survey of stakeholders, one-on-one interviews with knowledge holders, including those with lived experiences of oppression.

2. Policy and Process Review

Review of all district policies and procedures is a task that requires a significant expenditure of time and/or money and presents a concern that taking on this vast task would limit effectiveness of this goal. The proposed framework for policy review is as follows:

- a. A review of 2-3 policies/procedures that present concerns regarding EDI advancement. The specific policies and/or procedures to be reviewed will be identified in the JEDI audit.
- b. Development of a tool to be used to review all policies/procedures through the JEDI lens. The district reviews policies and procedures periodically and incorporating the use of a JEDI review tool into the process will ensure that all policies and procedures are addressed in this manner over time.

3. District-wide training modules

The development of 5-6 training modules and ensuring access to training for all district employees is a key part of the draft framework for the first year. As this is the first year of the plan, we recommend that training topics be broad in scope across the 5-6 topics, but that the specific topics remain basic. The main areas recommended are:

- Indigenous Relations
- Unconscious bias
- Anti-Racism
- LGBTQ2S+
- Increasing Accessibility
- Trauma Informed Approaches

An example of keeping the specific training topics basic to start is, for the LGBTQ2S+ topic to focus on gender identity and expression. This is a topic that seems poorly understood in our society at this time, and where misunderstanding causes significant harm to members of the LGBTQ2S+ community. While some district employees are well ahead of the basics, the need to bring everyone on board with the foundational understanding should be the focus of the first year.

Notes: The above is an example, and the specific training topics can be fleshed out in the audit phase. Training modules may be produced by contractors, including Channele, and/or in house. Additionally, training will be in an experiential model, where structured, lecture style, learning is limited and informal learning, such as group discussion and reflection, are maximized. Key tools for learners to incorporate into their professional practice will be highlighted and practiced.

The district wide JEDI training provides an opportunity to work directly with our NDTA and CUPE partners. Both unions have expressed a desire to be part of moving forward with this work, and having our employees hear from both groups, speaking in unison on the same topic, will have a positive impact on our district. We recommend that the unions be part of the planning and implementation of the training component of this work.

We welcome the Board's feedback on this proposed framework.

Appendix A: NLPS JEDI Project Plan