

DISTRICT HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

Fostering Discrimination-Free Working and Learning Environments

MINUTES

Thursday, April 21st, 2022

4:00 pm - 5:30

pm

HRES Room 3

<u>COMMITTEE MEMBERS:</u>	Raquel Steen Central Okanagan Public Schools	Kyle Cormier Central Okanagan Public Schools	Norah Bowman Board of Education
	Nicola Baker COPAC	Jesse Bruce COPVPA	Violeta Malfair International Education and Welcome Centre
	Simone Gauthier CUPE	Deven Basdeo (by phone) KCR Community Resources	
	Shannon Rowe District Student Council	Mehak Parihar District Student Council	
<u>GUEST(S):</u>	Karen Gilbert MBSS Counselor	Nadine Hasanali District Cultural Support Worker	Aman Hundal Private Sponsor
	Lori Dawson-Bedard COTA Member	Dimitry Giebel Cofounder, Okanagan Support Services Organization	
<u>REGRET(S):</u>	Leigh-Ann Yanow COTA	Kelly Hanson COTA	Jill Voros (Alternate) COPVPA
	Wan Wan KCR Community Resources	Anima Anand KCR Community Resources	Tracey Beckett Family Support Institute BC
	Dr. Catherine Broom UBCO		

1. **AGENDA**

Approval of the **April 21st, 2022** Agenda – APPROVED by the committee with the following additions / amendments:

- 4.3 Education Student Services minutes of January 9th
- 4.4 Letter from Human Rights Commissioner ending mask mandate

2. **PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Adoption of the **February 1, 2022** Minutes.

The committee adopted the Minutes of the February 1, 2022 District Human Rights Committee meeting without additions or changes.

3. **PRESENTATIONS:**

3.1_MyEd – Gender Identity

Karen Gilbert

Presenter Karen Gilbert introduced MyEdBC documents and identified that there is no place for a student to provide for another gender beyond male or female. On BC Government and Federal Government websites the two governments have provided an X option. The addition of a gender X will align with provincial and federal government policies. Suggestion that our MyEdBC system offer these same options and can be changed locally.

Presenter Karen Gilbert also suggested that an option be provided for "preferred pronouns" for students be added in MyEdBC. District will investigate this possibility.

Moved that : The District Human Right Committee requests that the School District addresses the following in MyEdBC:

1. The gender identity column drop an "X" drop down. There is currently only a male and female option. PASSED
2. A preferred pronouns option be provided. PASSED

3.2 Welcome Centre- Refugee Support

Violeta Malfair / Nadine Hasanali / Aman Hundai / Dimitriy Giebel

Welcome Center is funded by Canadian government. Services provided at the Welcome Centre support all newcomers including refugees, permanent residents, and work and study permit immigrants. Welcome Centre staff collect all paperwork, help with online registration and complete English language assessments for school aged children. The role of Settlement Workers in Schools is to support newcomers and help children and families understand and settle into the education system. Welcome Center staff work in partnership with Kelowna Community Resources.

There are different types of refugees: privately sponsored, government sponsored and independently sponsored. The number of newcomers has increased in all areas over the last 3 years. The number of refugees has tripled and the number of students whose parents are on an eligible work or study permit has almost doubled.

CIRCC has established a settlement support services CUAET- **Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET)**. CUAET is a special program to support Ukrainians arriving to Canada. Details can be found [here](#)

Aman Hundal, private sponsor – Spoke about the work that the Afghani Sikh Refugee Project was doing supporting refugees from the Afghanistan that were arriving to the School District. These families had been facing persecution from the Taliban. Many children from these families are now attending schools in the district. Most of these refugees are privately sponsored.

Nadine Hasanali, District Cultural Support Worker - Spoke about work that she was doing to assist Arabic speaking students as they attend schools within the District. Some of these students face challenges with pressure to change or anglicize their names. There are also challenges with students who may feel pressure to lose their cultural identity. Nadine is providing advice and assistance to students who experience challenges adapting to their new school system.

Dimitry Giebel, co-founder of Okanagan Support Services Organization – Spoke about the unexpected war in the Ukraine and the challenges families are facing as mostly women and children leave the Ukraine as refugees. The social economics of families varied immensely. Some families have relatives in Canada, others do not. Conversation was about how to support Ukrainian refugees, what is in place for them, what schools can do, and what we as system do something for them. Presently 15 families have arrived in the Central Okanagan from the Ukraine and 12 students are attending schools in the Central Okanagan. The Welcome Center has been informed that at least 37 more families will be arriving in the next few months. Suggestion was made to connect schools to families in need in a "sponsor a family" campaign.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Human Rights Month – Curriculum Development

Raquel requested that this item be deferred to the June 2nd meeting due to time constraints.

4.2 KCR Diversity, Equity & Inclusion E-Module

Devon Basdeo stated that this e-module would be a paid course next time. He will let the committee know when another opportunity is available.

4.3 District Human Rights Committee – Cultural Competency Training.

Question regarding the Education and Student Services Meeting minutes which stated that the District Human Rights Committee is looking into options for Cultural Competency Training for all staff. Raquel will follow up with Yvonne Hildebrandt.

4.4 Letter from the Human Rights Commissioner ending the mask mandate

Request for clarification regarding a letter sent from the Human Rights Commissioner to end the mask mandate. Concerns expressed about the lack of modelling of continued mask wearing by staff for children who are immune compromised and are still needing to wear masks. The School District follows guidelines set by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health. Concern brought forward but there was no request for any action at this time.

5. INFORMATION ITEMS

5.1 Pride Month in June. District will be hosting a booth during the city Pride event on June 11.

COTA, CUPE, COPAC, DSC , Admin Council and Trustees will be invited to volunteer.

5.2 Request to have copies of the Sylix calendar to distribute next year to hang beside the multicultural calendar.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Upcoming District Human Rights Committee Meetings

Thursday, June 16, 2022 HES Room 3, 4:00 – 5:30