

Dismantling Anti-Black Racism and Intersectional Oppression Executive Manual

Members of the Subcommittee (*alphabetical order*):

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I Preamble

“If you are neutral in a situation of injustice you have chosen the side of the oppressor”

Desmond Tutu

The prevalence of anti-black racism in OSSTF and the upholding of anti-Black racism (ABR) in previous AMPAs has been pervasive and harmful to all members. In an attempt to address the interests of Black and racialized folks and to promote equitable relationships amongst all members, a historic and significant motion was passed at the Annual General Meeting June, 2021 to have an additional 4 Dismantling Anti-Black Racism and Intersectional Oppression Officers to the District Executive (Art 5.18).

In the education sector, the normalcy of everyday racism and in particular, anti-Black racism (ABR) has had such a devastating and lasting impact on the lives and well-being of Black students, parents, administrators, staff and teachers. According to the TDSB Annual Human Rights Report (Feb, 2021), race-related complaints made up 69 per cent of all reported hate incidents in the 2019-2020 school year, with anti-Black racism making up the biggest share.

From biased assessment to academic streaming, from acts of workplace harassment to outright hate crimes, these racially-motivated incidents have unfortunately happened far too frequently and oftentimes, gone unchallenged or unresolved. Timely and effective intervention and protection need to be in place to strengthen accountability.

Ontario’s [*Anti-Racism Directorate*](#) defines anti-Black racism as prejudice, attitudes, beliefs, stereotyping and discrimination directed at people of African descent and is rooted in their unique history and experience of enslavement and its legacy. Anti-Black racism is deeply embedded in Canadian institutions, policies and practices such that it is normalized or deemed invisible to the larger white society. Anti-Black racism is present in social, economic, educational and political structures and organizations and it leads to inequitable opportunities, lower socio-economic status, higher unemployment, underemployment, significant poverty rates and overrepresentation in the criminal justice system. (ontario.ca/document/data-standards-identification-and-monitoring-systemic-racism/glossary)

Within the Canadian context, the Covid pandemic has exacerbated and exposed the systemic inequities of race, class, gender and other intersectional oppression. Racism is also deeply

ingrained in the history of colonialism. The discovery of remains of Indigenous children in unmarked graves in former residential school sites across the country is a chilling reminder of the horror of Canada's legislated and institutional racism. The global Black Lives Matter protest movement in the summer of 2020 over the murder of George Floyd has also catapulted the urgency of addressing anti-Black racism (ABR) and bringing it into the forefront of public discourse.

At the same AGM, the delegates also adopted two motions – one on resourcing the work of these positions through a member levy for these 4 new Executives and the second on creating an anti-racism policy. Subsequently, the District Executive adopted a motion to create the mandate and duties of. Below is the resulting constitutional language in its entirety:

5.7.1 The District shall have a member levy dedicated to funding dismantling anti-black racism and intersectional oppression positions and initiatives where such funds are to be used to allow each Dismantling Anti-Black Racism and Intersectional Oppression Executive access to up to 30 days of time release during the school year, as well as to complete their duties

11.1 The District shall have an Anti-Racism policy

BIRT the District Executive Committee refer to BIWOC the creation of the duties of the Dismantling Anti-Black Racism and Intersectional Oppression Executives Manual with final approval by the District Executive. The recommendations of the BIWOC committee will be completed by the January 2022 meeting of the District Executive Committee.

Members of the Drafting subcommittee are fully cognizant that there will be varying levels of expectation on the scope and pace of the work that these 4 new Executives will take on. While we appreciate their critical presence and voices to the District Executive, the real work of dismantling ABR and intersectional oppression is far from being considered done. In fact, it is only the beginning. There will be different viewpoints and difficult conversations for all of us to wrestle with in the months ahead.

In foregrounding the dismantling of Anti-Black Racism as the focus of these new positions an environment that is committed to dismantling the systemic nature of ABR will be more inclusive, equitable and just for all.

The following sections on the principles, mandate and duties of the 4 new Executives will frame the work of this groundbreaking initiative. As teachers, educational workers and as trade unionists, our shared vision of building a just, equitable and inclusive union, workplaces and community will hold us together.

II. Principles

The work of dismantling anti-Black racism and intersectional oppression will be anchored on the following principles/core values:

- ***Centering and Valuing the lived experiences of Black, union members***, in all its complexity and intersectionality
- ***Creating an affirming and thriving workplace and union environment*** for Black members, teachers and educational staff that will be free of exclusion, harassment and discrimination.
- ***Equitable Representation***

Equity is about addressing the root of inequality and gaps of representation. Recognizing that systemic barriers are historically built-in and often accepted as norms to benefit some and exclude others, equity is about exposing these barriers and coming up with systemic solutions to address the injustices.

To be equitable within the internal union structure is to embrace the notion that **representation matters**. A commitment to equitable representation will enable Black members to be present throughout the organizational structure and at every decision making space not as tokens, but with voice, power and agency.

- ***Solidarity***

As members within the OSSTF Toronto union family, we are each other's keeper. The essence of solidarity is best expressed in the famous Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. quote; "*Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere*". Solidarity is deeply rooted in mutual respect, reciprocity and empathy

- ***Shared Responsibility***

To forge a strong sense of solidarity and unity, it is imperative that we recognize the onerous task of dismantling ABR and intersectional oppression within the union and in the workplace does not lie solely on the shoulders of Black, members of the Union. It is a shared responsibility for all members. True ally ship requires all of us to take responsibility to reflect on our social location, to unlearn and relearn. It also requires us to have the courage to speak up, to show up and to stand and be counted. We cannot afford to be neutral.

- ***Accountability***

Accountability represents a deep commitment to action and concrete outcomes on our collective project of dismantling ABR and intersectional oppression. It underscores a sense of urgency to move beyond beautifully- crafted policy statements and start addressing the systemic anti-Black racism barriers experienced by our members. Holding each other accountable requires taking ownership, responsibility and humility to follow through.

III. Duties and Responsibilities of Dismantling ABR Executive

- On an annual basis the group of 4 will meet to engage in planning sessions and then meet regularly (at least monthly) to review the progress of Dismantling ABR work.

- To enhance the profile of Dismantling ABR work and networking opportunities, the 4 Executives should attend provincial annual meetings.

Priority 1: Provide immediate support for BIWOC members who are experiencing ABR and being targeted

- Provide consultation to members to resolve issues of anti-Black racism and intersectional oppression;
- Listen to and provide understanding of perspectives of Black members and assist in the navigation of resources and resolution options;
- Provide leadership in developing strategies to create an environment that lends itself to members sharing sensitive, traumatic impacts of anti-Black racism and at the same time identify issues that will impact policy and the development of motions specific to this role;
- Provide leadership in developing evolving resources to use when supporting members.

Priority 2: Education and Communications

- Provide leadership development and mentoring for Black members;
- Collaborate with other Committees in integrating the focus of dismantling ABR in existing union education materials as well as creating new educational workshops that will deepen the building of new allies;
- To provide guidance and support on anti-Black racism education among members;
- Communicate the key messages and updates on dismantling ABR, including celebrating new milestones and achievement.

Priority 3: Strengthen Union policies and accountability on dismantling ABR

- To provide a critical lens, perspective and leadership with regards to dismantling anti-Black racism and intersectional oppression within the Union;
- Review and update current policies and procedures that will address the systemic barriers of ABR;
- Strengthen our Union's anti-harassment policy to include language on how anti-Black racism, discrimination, violence and harassment will not be tolerated;
- Develop clear standard and expectation within the Executive on shared responsibility and holding each other accountable;

- To advocate and strategize for positive policy change, including collaboration with other districts in updating current policies and procedures, crafting motions and amendments that will advance the agenda of dismantling ABR
- Develop complaint procedures to handle ABR concerns experienced by Black members; and facilitate resolution process whenever appropriate.

Recommendations:

The selection of the four Dismantling ABR and Intersectional Oppression Executives will be done through an appointment process. To ensure the voices and perspectives of the 3 bargaining units are represented, the composition of the 4 positions will be as follow:

- 2 from TTBU
- 1 from PSSP
- 1 from OTBU

To ensure the attendance of the four new Executives at AMPA the following timeline should be adhered to:

The Executive of each Bargaining unit will do a call-out for interested candidates shortly after the January 25th District Executive meeting and upon a thorough review, will appoint their representative(s). It is recommended that these positions be filled by March 11th.

Proposed selection Criteria:

- Demonstrated experience and activism as a dismantling ABR activist
- Demonstrated ability and proven track record in carrying out the dismantling ABR work
- Evidence of commitment to equity agenda
- To be a Black member of the African, Caribbean or diaspora communities.

Terms:

- staggered to allow for transfer of institutional knowledge
- 3 years
- up to 6 training and orientation days in the first year for the incoming appointees (overlap with year 3 of the Officer they are replacing)
 - Seek support from OSSTF/FEESO budget line for dismantling ABR training (Account #2018)
- To enhance the profile of dismantling ABR work and networking opportunities, the 4 Executives should attend provincial annual meetings.
 - (to be included in posting): Executives should be aware that AMPA takes place during the first weekend of March break (Friday - Monday).