
From: Denis Agar
Sent: March 23, 2020 11:09 AM
To: Janet Fraser
Cc: Ian Rowe; Leanne Dospital
Subject: My presentation at Budget Cttee about an in-service day for anti-racism training

Hello Trustee Fraser,

I can only imagine this is a busy and stressful time for you.

Are you continuing work on the budget, or has it been pre-empted by COVID-19 response?

As I promised at the committee meeting, I am e-mailing you to share my speech, contact info etc.

In short:

Now is the time to allocate budget to in-service anti-racism training for VSB administrators.

This is an urgent need that cannot be deferred to future budgets.

This will allow you to look students and parents in the eye and affirm that you have taken positive action to reduce racism and mitigate risk. Your vote will make the VSB a leader among districts, after years of lagging behind, despite having such a diverse student body.

Attached is the letter from Ian Rowe, Chair of the Lord Roberts PAC.

Thank you!

Denis Agar

*Vancouver BC
Parent of Grade 7 child at Roberts*

PS: **If you think that we don't need this** because Vancouver is relatively progressive, I implore you to click on one of the following links.

- [a 2-minute video](#) from the New York Times about the fact that **it affects everyone**
- [a report about how it affects Canadian students](#), even in the **most diverse cities** (flip to Section 4 if you're in a rush)
- [a great resource](#) from MIT on how to solve the problem.

Anti-Racism delegation to VSB Cttee of the Whole

March 11, 2020

- The first year of high school is an uncertain and nerve-wracking time for children
- I know how I felt taking that first step towards adulthood.
- I also know that my daughter will be faced with larger, more daunting systemic challenges as a black girl.
- I think about the experience of my wife, who was streamed into ESL, not because she didn't speak English, but because she looked different, likely by an administrator who meant no harm.
- Racism isn't just about schoolyard taunts. It's more about unconscious biases that you and I hold.
- The least we can do as responsible parents and teachers, is to take time to learn how these biases manifest in our behaviour, in ways that we don't realize.
- This is why the Lord Roberts PAC is asking for in-service training for VSB staff.
- We will be following up with each of you individually to address any questions or concerns you may have, and we're happy to talk on the phone or in person anytime.

Denis Agar

Dear VSB Trustee,

The Lord Roberts PAC is asking that you please read this email at your meeting.

Our children attend an amazing school of about 600 students where over 30 languages are spoken. We have students from across all socio-economic bands and a large variety of cultures and back grounds. This diversity is part of what makes Lord Roberts Elementary such a fantastic place for our children to go to school. This diversity is also likely to lead, at times, to incidents of racism and other forms of hate speech and intolerance.

Currently, VSB administrators are not supported in dealing with racism through mandatory bias or anti-racism training, or (as far as we know) detailed, transparent processes to support lessons learned in such training.

Because they lead the vast diversity within our schools, district level training of all VSB Principals and Vice-Principals is key in better supporting our administrators, and through them, our students and families.

Our parents asking that appropriate funds be budgeted for to deliver inservice training for all administrators at VSB to acknowledge unconscious bias and privilege, learn practical ways to promote awareness and empathy, and develop the skills necessary to respond to racism in schools. Training should include concrete steps to ensure lessons learned are brought into day to day operations, and processes.

Leading by example will assist teachers and students to become active, engaged, and critically-thinking citizens.

Please see the letter below that was sent to Ms. Hoffman and Ms. Fraser for details about the Lord Roberts' PAC's concerns and the necessity of mandatory training.

Thank you for your consideration. We will have a parent, Denis Agar, attend the meeting to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Rowe', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ian Rowe