

APRIL 2016

RCH NEWLETTER



STUDENTS AT
PENTZ ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL CREATE A
FREEDOM BLANKET

SCHOOL CLIMATE & CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING

Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) uses a students cultural background, previous experiences, learning styles and more to make learning relevant to them. Being culturally responsive is knowing who your students are, but also giving them voice in class. Without that, you may find your school climate is not what you want it to be.

I was lucky enough to go to a school and present on the PD day last Friday. It was a great opportunity to engage in some dialogue about what our views as staff are and how we relate that to our expectations for students.

In order to have a culturally responsive school, students have to know they are valued and that they have a voice that is going to be heard. That voice has to come from ALL students. Knowing they are wanted and valued for all of their differences in the buildings is the start of creating a safe space for students.

As staff, we have to have common language and expectations that students are aware of. Students can't know where they stand if we as a staff don't know where we stand. We have to make sure we are having continual conversations about our building norms, evaluating our written and unwritten rules, valuing the diversity of our school community and valuing the many backgrounds of our students.

When we starting looking through those vast lens' we will begin to be culturally responsive to our students.

Culturally Responsive Teaching



SCHOOL RCH LIAISONS

Did you know that every school has a school RCH Liaison. If including diversity and promoting an inclusive climate in your school is a priority, then this is something that you can do!

Each school has at least one teaching staff member that act as an RCH Liaison. You can have more than that! One thing you want to make sure is that you look at and familiarize yourself with the board RCH and provincial Racial Equity Policy. Below are some of the things that you should be doing as an RCH Liaison:



- Participate in training sessions organized by the Coordinator of RCH to provide instruction in awareness and skills related to the RCH policy, issues, and principles.
- Assist the school in developing programs that reflect the principles and policies of the SSRSB, the RCH policy, and the provincial Racial Equity policy.
- Work with school administration and other regional SSRSB staff to secure necessary resources to support RCH programs as determined by the school.
- Review with the school principal the school's plan for RCH awareness.
- Take a leadership role in staff development of awareness and skills surrounding the RCH policy, topics, and tools, such as bias evaluation instruments, cultural competencies, etc.
- Assist principals in arranging follow-up counselling for victims and instigators of harassment, violence, and bullying, and in contacting appropriate services to ensure student needs are met.
- Assist in providing suitable educational experiences to students returning to school from suspensions related to RCH offences.
- Ensure that every incident that involves human rights harassment, sexual harassment, homophobic acts, bullying, or hate crimes between student and student is documented and maintained on file in a secure location (i.e.: a locked file in the office).

REPORTING AN RCH INCIDENTS

WHO CAN REPORT

Anyone can report an RCH incident. So what does that look like. I have been asked about what process folks can go through when then see/hear of an incident that would fall under our board RCH policy. First, it is important to know what categories are in the policy and what one would deem a RCH referral. The categories would include, but are not limited to:

- Bullying
- Hate Crimes and propaganda
- Homophobic acts
- Racial, Ethnic, and Human Rights Harassment
- Sexual Harassment

It is important to report and document incidents related to any of these categories as well as to have consistency in dealing with them. To help, I wanted to share some general procedures for teachers, RCH liaisons and school admin. As always, if you ever have questions, do not hesitate to call. Please realize that some of the categories require deeper levels and you should refer to the actual policy for all specifics.

THE TEACHER SHALL:

1. Play a proactive role in demonstrating and promoting positive race relations, cross-cultural understanding, human rights, and equity education.
2. Actively utilize curriculum in all of its forms to model positive race relations, cross-cultural, human rights, and equity education.

3. Ensure that all pedagogical practices promote positive race relations, cross-cultural, human rights, and equity understanding.
4. Immediately intervene and report any incident of harassment, violence, and bullying to the school principal.
5. Support the victims of such incidents.

THE SCHOOL RCH LIAISON SHALL:

1. Assist in arranging follow-up counselling for victims and instigators of harassment, violence, and bullying, and in contacting appropriate services to ensure student needs are met.
2. Support re-integrative education processes for students following RCH-related suspensions with appropriate time allowed during the school day.
3. Ensure that every reported bullying incident between student and student is documented and maintained on file at the SSRSB office.

THE PRINCIPAL SHALL:

1. Inform all students, staff, families, and school advisory council members of this policy at the opening of school, and at such times during the year as necessary, to raise student, staff, families, and school advisory council awareness of this policy with respect to racial, ethnic, and human rights harassment, and bullying.

2. Be the primary investigator of any incident of racial, ethnic, or human rights harassment between staff and students, students and students. Report the incident and status of investigation to the Director of Programs & Student Services and the Coordinator of RCH.
3. Make it clear to all staff members, students, volunteers, and support persons that all racial, ethnic, or human rights harassment incidents must be reported to the office as soon as they occur. Should an incident occur during an extra-curricular, or other school-sponsored activity outside the regular school day, it must be reported by the individual responsible for the activity at the commencement of the next school session.
4. Ensure that following a suspension the suspended student(s) meet with the RCH Liaison upon return to school. The RCH Liaison will develop an appropriate learning plan designed to increase the student's awareness of issues related to the incident, and designed to develop a positive understanding of racial, ethnic, and human rights understanding
5. The victim will be supported and will be seen to be supported.

STUDENTS AT SQMS LEARNING WITH SSW ABOUT KENTE CLOTH



Kente Cloth colors denote specific meanings. Below is a list of colors and their meanings:

- Blue – peace, togetherness, love and harmony
- Black – maturity, spiritual energy, mourning, funeral and passing rites
- Gold – high worth, richness, fertility, royalty, prosperity, monetary wealth
- Green – land, crops, vegetation, harvest, growth, spiritual growth and renewal
- Yellow – high worth, richness, fertility, royalty, prosperity, monetary wealth
- Grey – Healing rituals; cleansing rituals; symbolizes ash
- Pink – feminine; mildness and feminine qualities
- White – pureness, cleansing rites and festivals
- Maroon – mother earth and healing
- Red – death; funerals; mourning
- Purple – feminine; worn by girls and women
- Silver – peace and joy; referencing to the moon



**Freedom
quilt activity with
student support
workers and students
at Bayview.**



**Quill work with
students in
Mi'kmaq studies
class at LRHS**

RCH RESOURCES:

Link to webinar on
Culturally Responsive
Teaching:

[https://dvl.ednet.ns.ca/
videos/culturally-
responsive-teaching](https://dvl.ednet.ns.ca/videos/culturally-responsive-teaching)

Link to disaggregated
assessment data:

[https://plans.ednet.ns.ca/
disaggregated-results](https://plans.ednet.ns.ca/disaggregated-results)

Africville story map:

<http://arcg.is/1MsaVrl>

100 Yrs of Loss:

[http://
www.legacyofhope.ca/
projects/100-years-of-loss-
exhibition](http://www.legacyofhope.ca/projects/100-years-of-loss-exhibition)

Independent Indigenous
News in Atlantic Canada:

<http://kukukwes.com>

The Witness Blanket

<http://witnessblanket.ca/>

Mi'kmaq Knowledge
Keepers:

[http://
player.communitylive.ca/
Player/Player/46#](http://player.communitylive.ca/Player/Player/46#)

Use these
resource links to
push your learning and
find new information to
support students and
expand diversity in
your classroom.



MAY:

MONTHLY OBSERVANCES:

Asian Heritage Month
Leave a Legacy Month
MS Awareness Month
Museum Month
Sexual Abuse/Assault Prevention
Month
Vision Health Month

DAILY OBSERVANCES:

May 23: Victoria Day

JUNE:

MONTHLY OBSERVANCES:

National Aboriginal History Month
ALS Awareness Month
International Men's Health Month

DAILY OBSERVANCES:

June 7: Ramadan Begins
June 21: National Aboriginal Day
June 24: St. Jean Baptiste Day
June 27: Discovery Day