

*Racial Equity Together*



# K-12 Anti-Racism Action Plan



Ministry of  
Education and  
Child Care

The Ministry of Education and Child Care acknowledges that its offices are situated on the Ləkʷəŋən territory of the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations and on the territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵw̓x̓wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

The K-12 Education and Child Care sector carries out its work on the territories of the 204 First Nations communities across B.C., each with unique cultures, languages, legal traditions and relationship to these lands and waters. We also respectfully acknowledge and honour the Métis and Inuit people living in B.C.

The Ministry of Education and Child Care gratefully recognizes the honesty and vulnerability that so many students, staff, families, and community members have offered in sharing their stories, experiences, and ideas. The generous sharing of this lived and living experience has been foundational to the creation of this action plan. The ministry recognizes the personal stories as truths.



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Message from  
**Honourable Rachna Singh**  
**Minister of Education and Child Care**

Much of what we learn during our time in school shapes us as adults. During these years, we begin to understand the fundamentals of learning and build the foundations of literacy and numeracy across all subject areas – Language Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics, Arts Education, and Science – to name a few. As we learn these skills, we also seek to strengthen our personal and social development in understanding our identity and place in society.

It is vital younger generations learn about racism and discrimination and how it has impacted – and continues to impact – people throughout B.C. By understanding the realities of racism and discrimination, we can continue on a positive path forward, with young people as part of the solution towards making a more equitable and welcoming province for everyone.

*“It is vital younger generations learn about discrimination and how it has impacted – and **continues to impact** – people throughout B.C.”*

In B.C., we have taken several steps to recognize and address racism and discrimination head-on, both in communities and schools. In the K-12 education system, we have made changes to the provincial curriculum to support more Indigenous languages, cultural learning opportunities, and an increase to the number of social justice courses for students.

We have developed anti-racism training resources for teachers and ensured codes of conduct and policies are in place in all 60 school districts and independent schools. In addition, we have expanded **erase**, our provincial safety action plan, to provide more anti-racism resources for students and families.

I am pleased to release the K-12 Anti-Racism Action Plan as a key initiative to dismantle systemic racism and discrimination. It provides training and resources to help students and educators understand what it means to be anti-racist. By empowering students and educators with tools to safely stand against and respond to discrimination, this action plan will help create a province where all communities are celebrated and respected.

**This action plan will help create a province where all communities are celebrated and respected**

The action plan has been developed from dialogues, stories, personal reflections, and ideas shared by First Nations, Indigenous Partners, IBIPOC Community organizers, community organizations<sup>1</sup>, education partners, and students through the Community Roundtables on Anti-Racism in Education and the Youth Dialogue Series.

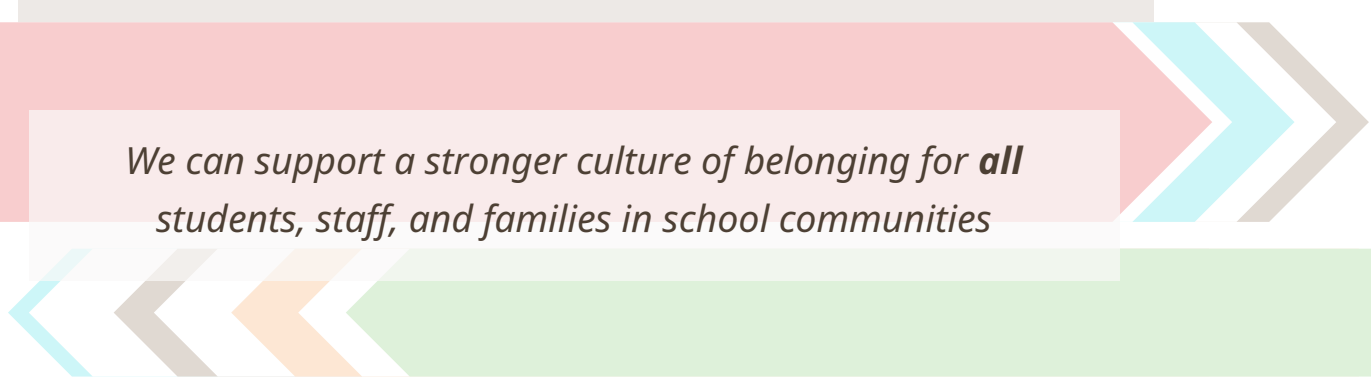
I thank everyone who helped to inform this province-wide plan for the education sector so we can support a stronger culture of belonging for all students, staff and families in school communities.

Let us continue to stand up against racism and discrimination every day.

By truly acknowledging our past, and teaching about historic and current injustices and inequities, we can learn from our shared history, and embrace diversity and inclusion while creating ever-lasting change toward a future that is anti-racist.

Sincerely,

Rachna Singh,  
Minister of Education and Child Care



*We can support a stronger culture of belonging for **all** students, staff, and families in school communities*

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<sup>1</sup> Community organizations are referenced throughout this document as a broad term representing a range of diverse and unique Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour identities including, but not limited to, multicultural, ethnic, and faith-based organizations.



Message from  
**Honourable Mable Elmore**  
**Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives**

From an early age, our perspectives and values are shaped by our families, communities, and peers. The interactions we have with others, the interactions we see in our communities and in the media, as well as the teachings we receive from caregivers and educators impact our opinions and worldviews. This includes how we see our own place, and that of our peers, in society.

These experiences can empower young people to grow into confident leaders, mentors, and allies. For too long, however, not all British Columbians have been given the skills, knowledge, or opportunities to identify patterns of discrimination and racism in their communities. Educating students about B.C.'s and Canada's full history is a crucial first step in helping more people understand the power dynamics that continue to impact Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour. Only then are they equipped to identify and address overt and subtle racism where and when they see it.

When we share this knowledge with the youngest generations and support them to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for responding to racism and discrimination, we are creating a generation of future leaders with the confidence to build a more equitable province for everyone.

We know that this work is only one part of the puzzle. While we are investing in a bright future for our province through this K-12 Anti-Racism Action Plan, we are also addressing racism and discrimination happening right now.

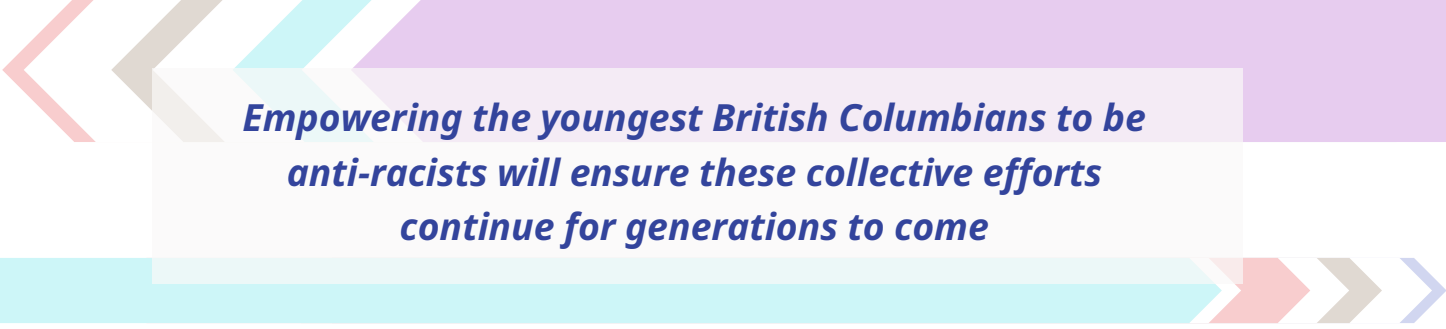
*We are creating a generation of future leaders with the confidence to build a more equitable province for everyone*

Through the Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network, we're giving local organizations the tools they need to fight hate and respond to incidents of racism and hate in their communities. Through the Anti-Racism Data Act, we're working to identify and break down the barriers Indigenous and racialized people face when accessing government services. We're also developing a broader Anti-Racism Act that will further address systemic racism within government.

We have made important progress in dismantling systemic racism and there is more work ahead. We are committed to working across government and with all partners to build a better, more inclusive B.C. for everyone. Empowering the youngest British Columbians to be anti-racists will ensure these collective efforts continue for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Mable Elmore,  
Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives




***Empowering the youngest British Columbians to be anti-racists will ensure these collective efforts continue for generations to come***

# Vision

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B.C. students achieve their full potential in an education environment that is equitable, free of racism and systemic barriers, and where all students, staff, and families feel welcome, safe, respected, and valued.

## Introduction



Systemic racism and settler colonialism have shaped our province for generations, and this continues to hurt Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour in B.C. To help address discrimination, dismantle racism and make B.C. a more equitable, inclusive, and welcoming province for everyone, we are investing in anti-racism initiatives, such as the Anti-Racism Data Act, anti-racism legislation, and the Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network. To reaffirm this commitment, equity and anti-racism are foundational principles for all Minister's mandate letters.

The B.C. education system also holds great responsibility in addressing the systemic and interpersonal racism that continues to exist throughout the education system today. B.C.'s **Vision for Student Success** is for learners to develop their individual potential and acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy society and sustainable economy. A necessary piece to achieving this vision is ensuring government and education partners listen and learn from Indigenous and racialized partners and communities to work collaboratively towards an education system that is free from racism and systemic barriers and promotes equity for all students. In July 2020, a **statement of support** for anti-racism efforts was released from the Minister of Education and B.C.'s education partners<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> First Nations Education Steering Committee, First Nations Schools Association, BC School Trustees Association, BC Teachers' Federation, CUPE BC, BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils, BC Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association, BC School Superintendents Association, BC Association of School Business Officials and the Federation of Independent School Associations



## Racism and Mental Health

We know that racism has adverse impacts on young people and on their ability to thrive in society. As stated in the **Mental Health in Schools Strategy**, giving children the best possible start is key to better long-term mental health outcomes. Wellness promotion and prevention needs to be the focus, starting in the early years and spanning throughout a child's life. The effects of racism on mental health are well documented and have been consistently linked with higher instances of stress, poor health outcomes, and suicidal thoughts and attempts in youth.

Students, staff, and families representing Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour have been reporting experiences of interpersonal and systemic racism and oppression in B.C.'s education system for generations. Studies indicate that exposure to racial discrimination, particularly in youth, is a significant predictor of depressive symptoms.

### We know that

In 2018, 14% of racialized students, who completed the BC Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS), reported experiencing discrimination because of race, ethnicity, or skin colour. This is an increase from 11% in 2013 (BC AHS 2013, 2018).<sup>3</sup>

Three-in-five (58%) B.C. students say they have seen other students insulted, bullied, or excluded based on their race or ethnicity (ARI-UBC, 2021)<sup>4</sup>.

B.C. youth who experienced racial discrimination reported poorer health and well-being than their peers, including being less likely to feel hopeful for their future and to feel good about themselves (BC AHS 2018).


Racial discrimination was also associated with poorer student mental health, including experiencing extreme stress and despair, self-harming, and seriously considering or attempting suicide (BC AHS 2018).

A safe and supportive school environment, as well as the presence of caring school staff and feelings of being treated fairly, were associated with more positive outcomes among those who had experienced racism including feeling safe at school and feeling good about themselves (BC AHS 2018).

<sup>3</sup> The British Columbia Adolescent Health Survey (**BC AHS**) is a province-wide survey conducted by the McCreary Centre Society issued to youth in grades 7 to 12 every five years since 1992. The survey highlights health trends among students to help identify risks and protective factors. Special topic fact sheets are created on certain issues such as **racial discrimination**.

<sup>4</sup> The Angus Reid Institute (ARI) partnered with the University of British Columbia (UBC) to conduct **an online survey** from Aug. 24-27, 2021 among a representative randomized sample of 872 Canadians aged 12 to 17, whose parents are members of Angus Reid Forum.

## What We Have Heard



Over the summer months of 2019, the provincial government hosted community dialogues across B.C. to hear stories of racism and discrimination. Dialogue participants shared that acts of racism were on the rise, were adversely affecting more and more British Columbians, and these experiences were taking place in a variety of public sectors including education. Story by story, it became clear that many individuals and communities were deeply affected by historical and current acts of racism, and that communities were looking for provincial leadership.

A new Community Roundtable on anti-racism in education was created in July 2020 to support the development of an anti-racism action plan. The first Minister's Community Roundtable on Racism in Education hosted key participants in B.C., including Indigenous organizations and partners, community organizations, and education partners. The draft K-12 Anti-Racism Action Plan was developed in part from feedback received and stories shared at this Roundtable.

At the second Community Roundtable in 2021, participants expressed that racism

towards their communities was on the rise. Participants noted that some of their communities were struggling to deal with the response to heightened levels of racist incidents with limited community capacity in order to support those affected. They identified that both immediate supports and long-term systemic changes in education were needed to achieve racial safety and equity. The Community Roundtables will continue on an annual basis to ensure the community conversation on racism in education continues.

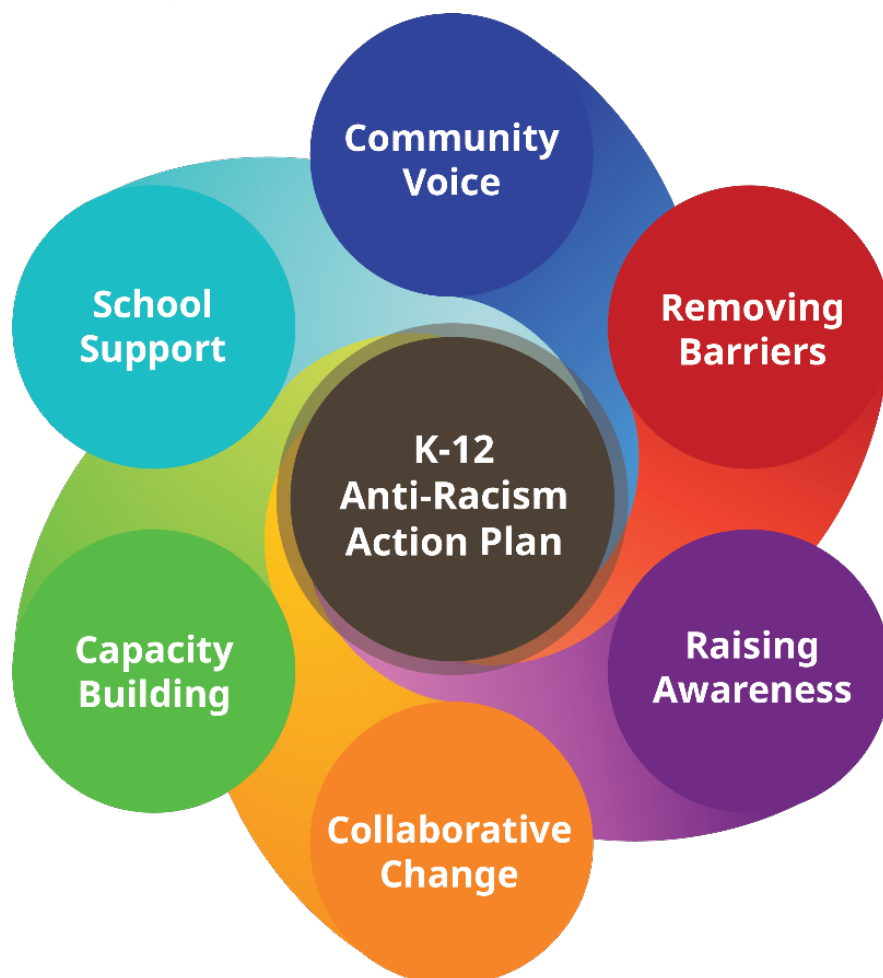
In 2022, Minister's Youth Dialogue Sessions were hosted for students in grades 7-12 from across the province to share their experiences of racism in B.C. schools. The stories and ideas shared by the students were key in informing how the ministry and school leaders can create anti-racist, equitable, and safe learning environments for all. The youth described how important it is that system leaders ensure caring and responsive opportunities for racialized students to share their stories and be heard by their teachers, principals, and district staff. This powerful dialogue series shaped the design and implementation of the K-12 Anti-Racism Action Plan.

## The K-12 Anti-Racism Action Plan

The K-12 Anti-Racism Action Plan is a multi-year framework to specifically address racism and discrimination in education and to create a culture and climate of belonging for all students, staff, and families. This is the first phase of what will be many years of collective commitment to dismantle systemic racism in the K-12 provincial education sector.

The current plan is designed to improve outcomes for racialized students and support sector-wide understanding and growth of anti-oppressive systemic practises and content. The Action Plan provides supports and builds equity-based initiatives to start to address historical and oppressive barriers and ultimately lead to student success.

The Ministry is committed to Indigenous-specific strategies in the **Declaration Act Action Plan** for all Indigenous students. One of these strategies includes a First Nations Anti-Racism strategy led by the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and supported by the Ministry.



## Foundational Understandings

Although students' individual experiences of racism vary, racism holds all students back from truly thriving as individuals and communities. The following elements establish the foundational understanding of this Action Plan as we work together to move forward and stop further harm to racialized communities.

**Indigenous Worldviews and Perspectives** – There is growing understanding and acknowledgment of the mistreatment and disrespect that First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples have endured throughout Canada's colonial history. This harm continues in present day. The necessary commitment to truth, reconciliation, and healing must include the lens of understanding the connections and relationships that create holistic learning.

**Affirmation and Recognition** - Stories of racism and discrimination have been told time and time again. Moving forward, this strategy acknowledges these experiences without requiring those impacted to retell their stories and prove the harm that has occurred and continues to occur. These experiences are real, they are harmful, they are the truth, and they must be addressed in all contexts of K-12 education.

**Equity and Inclusion** – Students, staff, and families may have their own experiences of discrimination and oppression; however, the unique experiences of racism must be specifically addressed to create positive and system level change. Anti-racism cannot be addressed in siloes. Although the strategy is focussed on anti-racism, there is recognition that different experiences are shaped by the intersection of unique identities (e.g., intersectionality).

**Adult Well-being** – Racialized staff report experiences of racism in their school communities and working environments. The **Mental Health in Schools Strategy** emphasizes the importance of addressing the well-being of adults in the education system. In addition to effects on mental health, racism experienced by staff leads to issues with recruitment and retention, which further leads to less racial diversity in schools. This perpetuates racism further for students who do not see themselves represented in their leaders. Anti-racism initiatives must recognize the importance of supporting adults as well as students.

## Principles

The K-12 Anti-Racism Action Plan is guided by the following principles as we move forward:

Recognize and respect Indigenous rights and titles in accordance with Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, and the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action

Engage First Nations, Indigenous partners, education partners, community organizations representing racialized people, school boards, school communities, and students to work collaboratively, share voice, and integrate work across the sector and within the ministry.

Amplify and defer to the voices and perspectives of those with lived and living racism experiences.

Demonstrate humility and respect and a continuous improvement mind-set.

Apply evidence-based decision-making reflecting current knowledge and data about anti-racism related systems-level change.

## Priority Actions

The K-12 Anti-Racism Action Plan includes six priority areas of action: Community Voice, Removing Barriers, Raising Awareness, Collaborative Change, Capacity Building, and School Support.

### Community Voice

Community Voice ensures that all actions in this plan are guided and co-led by First Nations, Indigenous partners, education partners, community organizations, and students with lived and living experience of racism. These voices have been missing, historically, from key conversations and decisions in government systems.

#### **Annual Minister's Community Roundtable**

*An annual event for the Minister to engage directly with the IBPOC community to hear their experiences, perspectives, and recommendations on the Action Plan*

#### **Minister's Youth Dialogue Series**

*The Minister of Education and Child Care will host at least two Youth Dialogue Series: one for intersectional and diverse youth and one for Indigenous youth*

## Removing Barriers

Removing Barriers creates a system and communication paths to ensure racism cannot thrive through policy and culture.

Roundtable participants, as well as community and sector representatives, asked for more accountability to be embedded in the plan after the first draft, not just for ministry actions, but also for leaders in the system. They also shared the importance of communicating with parents and guardians on the action plan and progress, as well supporting resources to feel connected to their school community.

### **Anti-racism in district plans**

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*Embed anti-racism reporting requirements within strategic plans*

### **Parent Engagement Plan**

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*A co-developed plan with BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils to inform parents of Action Plan initiatives and provide supporting details and information that will promote parent and guardian understanding and welcome their involvement in planning school anti-racism initiatives*

## Raising Awareness

Raising Awareness provides resources and engagement opportunities to highlight the unique identities and experiences across the province and how we can better appreciate each other, as well as to increase understanding of racism and its harmful effects.

Roundtable participants asked for a calendar to supplement district and school calendars to include more diversity as a first step to ensuring that schools reflect all identities as valued and important. Student-to-student racism was also identified as needing to be addressed, and that starts with foundational understanding of racism, equity, and inclusion.

### **Inclusion Calendar**

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*Provide districts with a calendar identifying significant events of advocacy, celebration, or honour*

### **Youth Engagement**

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*Presentations and workshops hosted by B.C. Lions to grades 6-10 to explore and engage with issues of anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion*

## Collaborative Change

Collaborative Change engages all layers of the education system to create system level change. It is imperative that the ministry, school districts, education partners, school staff, students, and families build on existing partnerships and create networks to champion anti-racism work.

Students have shared that only some school staff provide culturally safe and welcoming learning environments, and that is an everyday experience to be met with racism in their day at school in different forms. System level change requires the commitment of all layers of the sector to not only support this work, but also compel it.

### **Education Partner Collaborative**

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*A committee of education partners, including Indigenous partners, to work collaboratively to address systemic racism*

### **Educator Network**

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*A committee for educators at both district and school level, built over phases, to provide peer support, build internal capacity, and identify needs to engage in anti-racism work*

## Capacity Building

Capacity Building creates the foundational understanding of racism for all staff in the sector, to recruit diversity in the workforce so that all students see themselves represented in school leadership, and to create a system that is welcoming to all staff.

Students have told the ministry of their hardship from moving through the K-12 system without seeing school leaders who represent and understand them. As well as watching Indigenous, Black, People of Colour (IBPOC) and allied school staff being treated with discrimination. In addition, educators and other school staff have shared the challenges of working in a system that does not feel welcoming and inclusive.

### **Recruitment and Retention Strategy**

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*Grow diversity in the education workforce so that students see themselves in their teachers and have access to diverse role models through their educational journey*

*Create better working environments for IBPOC teachers to improve retention*

### **Anti-Racism Training (for everyone)**

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*Develop a foundational online training course available to a sector-wide audience including all ministry, school, and district staff*

*Develop additional professional learning opportunities to support specific roles and to build on foundational learning*

## School Support

School Support provides resources, support, and guidance for schools to create anti-racism learning environments.

Students have acknowledged the amount of time they spend in school in their young lives and the influence this environment has on their well-being and development. For students to thrive, they need to see themselves represented as valued members of the school community, as well as in their learning materials and content. They also need safe reporting processes for acts of racism. School leaders to receive those reports with understanding and action-oriented responses.

### **Incident Response Guidelines & Resource Guide**

*Develop resources to support districts and schools to identify and respond to incidents of racism, as well as define common terms to establish collective understanding*  
*Develop a resource guide for the sector to provide recommended practices for implementing anti-racism work and ensuring learning environments are safe, welcoming, and inclusive*

### **Curriculum Resources**

*Inventory existing anti-racism curriculum resources, identify gaps in the inventory, and address existing gaps in resources*



## Conclusion



The K-12 Anti-Racism Action Plan is a multi-year path forward and an opportunity to bring the education sector together to confront racism in all its forms, but it is only the beginning. This plan outlines the first three years of the provincial school community working together to establish a strong foundation and to chart a path forward for many years of continued dedication to come. This work must always include listening to students, staff, and families, and to be quick to adapt to shifting issues and experiences.

Everyone can play a role in identifying and addressing racism in the education system. System level change requires a shared understanding of our collective responsibility in dismantling racism in schools. Moving forward requires tough and uncomfortable conversations and a willingness to adopt new approaches to delivering education programs that ensure everyone in the school community know they are valued and important members.

The Honourable Murray Sinclair said, “Education got us into this mess and education will get us out of it.” The K-12 Anti-Racism Action Plan sets out to ensure that all students in the B.C. education system can learn in an environment where they feel welcome and valued so that school experiences can help shape a more inclusive and respectful society for everyone.



## Appendix - Action Plan Timelines

<b>Element</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<b>Community Voice</b>	Annual Minister's Community Roundtable	Annual
	Minister's Youth Dialogue Series	Annual
<b>Removing Barriers</b>	Anti-racism in district plans	2022/23 and 2023/24
	Parent Engagement Plan	2021/22 and 2022/23
<b>Raising Awareness</b>	Inclusion Calendar	2021/22 and 2022/23
	BC Lions Youth Engagement	2021/22 to 2023/24
<b>Collaborative Change</b>	Education Partner Collaborative	Ongoing
	Educator Network	2021/22 – Phase 1 Ongoing expansion
<b>Capacity Building</b>	Recruitment & Retention Strategy	TBD
	Anti-Racism Training (for everyone)	2022/23
<b>School Support</b>	Incident Response Guidelines & Resource Guide	2022/23
	Curriculum Resources	2022/23