

FINAL REPORT EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION



2023-2024

<https://tinyurl.com/ASDWCSL>



INTRODUCTION

The Council of Student Leaders is a group of 25 students representing the 19 High Schools in the Anglophone West School District. This is the second year that the Council of Student Leaders has been active with one member returning from the previous year. The council is a student voice project in which the group is empowered to conduct research about students, for students, and by students. By gathering student perspectives and data from the sixty-nine schools in the district, the council's research allows all students to be heard so that they can receive the education that meets their needs and current realities.

The council meets in person four times a year. Between each meeting, subcommittees of students completed the necessary work to be ready for the next meeting. At the first meeting, the council members determined a "deep-dive topic," an issue of common concern, across all the schools. During the second meeting, the council refined its research question and designed its research tools. By the third meeting, the council analyzed the evidence collected and developed recommendations. Finally, at the fourth meeting, the council conducted a line by line read of the final report and approved it.

Another important function of the council was to conduct a formal board meeting at each in-person meeting. During these board meetings the council received updates from the Superintendent on current affairs within education and the district; they also had the opportunity to engage with the Superintendent directly on topics of interest to the students and their classmates.

The Council of Student Leaders came together in October 2023 with the goal of determining the Deep Dive topic of the year. In small groups, the council members discussed common experiences across their schools, and determined what areas of concern existed among the students. Each group brought ideas to a group forum, and through discussion arrived at a list of common concerns. Using a voting system called 'Dotmocracy' the deep-dive topic was narrowed down to:

"How does ASD-W educate students K-12 on minority groups with the aim of reducing discrimination?"

In November, a subcommittee met with Susan Young, the ASD-W Supervisor of Data and Accountability, to examine available data on the topic of discrimination. The group identified 2 springboard data points from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Integrated Student Survey (2022-2023).

Data Point 1.

Grades 4 and 5 students were asked if they had experiences where "someone made mean comments about their race, religion, or personal features."

20.4 % said "yes" and 79.6% said "no."

The total sample size was 3045 students.

Data Point 2

Grades 6 to 12 students were asked whether "Respecting other cultures is something that students should learn as early as possible."

3.3% disagreed. 9.2% Neither agreed nor disagreed. 87.5% of students agreed.

The total sample size was 10145 students.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Discrimination occurs when individuals are treated unfairly or differently because of protected characteristics like a disability, ancestry, sexual orientation, religion, or family status.

*<https://www2.gnb.ca>
New Brunswick Human Rights Commission
The New Brunswick Human Rights Act Explained*

When the council met in December 2023, these two data were shared with the full group and the research questions were refined to:

- **What have ASD-W students learned and experienced regarding discrimination both inside and outside the school system?**
- **What can be done to reduce and end discrimination in school?**

METHODOLOGY

The Council developed four ways to gather data to address the research questions at ASD-W schools in the month of February, 2024.

Research Method	Description	Sample Size and Description
1) Research in Elementary Schools	<p>Read a picture book and lead a class discussion on how to help everyone feel they belong.</p> <p>Responses were recorded on chart paper.</p> <p><i>A Kid, is a Kid, is a Kid</i> by Sara O'Leary (2021)</p> <p><i>Say Something/Ta Voix Compte</i> by Peter Reynolds (2019)</p>	<p>9 classrooms total</p> <p>1 Urban Elementary (3 classrooms)</p> <p>1 Rural Elementary (4 classrooms)</p> <p>1 Rural Elementary with many newcomer families (2 classrooms)</p>
2) Anonymous Student Survey	<p>10 question anonymous survey with closed questions.</p> <p>See Appendix A</p>	<p>264 responses</p> <p>Grades 6-12</p>
3) World Café	<p>Small groups of students collaboratively answered questions at stations on different aspects of discrimination. Responses were recorded on chart paper.</p>	<p>3 schools total</p> <p>1 Urban Middle School (2 classrooms)</p> <p>1 Rural 6-12 school (1 classroom)</p> <p>1 Urban High School by invitation to: The BIPOC - Black, Indigenous, People of Colour Student Group, The GSA- Gender and Sexualities Alliance Student Group, and the Student Council.</p>
4) Teacher Interviews	<p>Teachers were invited to share their observations on the topic in individual interviews.</p>	<p>11 teachers total</p> <p>1 Urban Elementary school</p> <p>1 Rural Elementary school</p> <p>1 Rural Grade 6-12 school</p> <p>2 Urban High Schools</p>

METHODOLOGY CONTINUED

Furthermore, the Council invited three guest speakers to share their experience as advocates for populations impacted by discrimination:

- **Sarah Francis** Nihkanatpat ciw Skicinowi Kehkiketowaken,
Director – Leader for Indigenous Teachings
- **Matthew Martin** (Black Lives Matter New Brunswick)
- **Ben McNamara** (Inclusion NB)



*Council member Jaden Murphy
leading a World Café.*



*Council Vice-President Lilian Dupuis
and Secretary Ashton Little read a
picture book and lead a class
discussion.*

ANALYSIS

Research Data Points	
	Elementary School Class Discussions
	Anonymous Student Survey
	World Café
	Teacher Interviews

The following seven themes emerged across a minimum of 3 data points.

A checkmark indicates that the theme emerged in that data point. ✓

Theme 1. Discrimination is happening in schools.

48 of 254 or 19% of students indicated they had experienced discrimination at school.

✓	Elementary School Class Discussions
✓	Anonymous Student Survey
✓	World Café
✓	Teacher Interviews

Students were asked at which grade they first experienced discrimination at school:

15% indicated the first experience was at Kindergarten.
33% indicated the first experience was at Grade 6.

The Council noted that K and Gr. 6 had the highest reported number of first experiences of discrimination. The Council noted that K and Gr 6 are years in which students start at a new school.
[Anonymous Student Survey]

“The students experience it on the internet, public places, and in schools”
[World Cafe]

Theme 2. Students and staff don't know how to respond to discrimination.





	Elementary School Class Discussions
✓	Anonymous Student Survey
✓	World Café
✓	Teacher Interviews

“We need to educate on culture and educate the teachers before the students. We need to address discrimination and work to support teachers supporting students.” [Interview]

“A lot of teachers are uncomfortable and don't know what to say”
[World Cafe]

Only 107 of 264 students (40%) responded that they had learned how to deal with discrimination at school [Anonymous Student Survey]

Theme 3. Discrimination is understood by students and staff in broad terms and may not mean the same thing to everyone.





	Elementary School Class Discussions
	Anonymous Student Survey
	World Café
	Teacher Interviews

“Discrimination is rarely talked about, and when it is, teachers skim the topic.” [World Café]

“Some teachers are concerned we only teach about the trauma and don’t celebrate achievements.” [Interview]

“Distract the bully”- At the elementary level discrimination is understood as “bullying” [Elementary]

Theme 4. Students want accountability when discrimination occurs.





	Elementary School Class Discussions
	Anonymous Student Survey
	World Café
	Teacher Interviews

“Go get a big person and ask them to make the bully stop.” [Elementary]

“Take these situations more seriously” [World Cafe]

Students selected “Communicating school policies that deal with discrimination” is an effective way to reduce discrimination. (110/264) [Anonymous Student Survey]

Theme 5. Students and staff expect somebody above them to deal with discrimination.

	Elementary School Class Discussions
	Anonymous Student Survey
	World Café
	Teacher Interviews

Teachers expressed that it was “far too dependent on classroom teachers to deal with discrimination” and that if it “wasn’t them doing it, it wouldn’t happen.” [Interview]

“If you see someone crying at the park, get a teacher” [Elementary]

“[It] needs to be clear who we can talk to about our problems in school” [World Café]

Theme 6. Students often learn about discrimination but not its impacts or how to deal with it.

✓	Elementary School Class Discussions
✓	Anonymous Student Survey
✓	World Café
✓	Teacher Interviews

“I have learned what discrimination is” (197/254, 78%)
 “I have learned the impacts of discrimination” (140/254, 55%)
 “I have learned ways to address discrimination” (107/254, 42%)
 [Anonymous Student Survey]

“A lot of our learning [only] takes place during Black History Month.”
 [World Café]

Theme 7. Verbal slurs are heard at school.

	Elementary School Class Discussions
✓	Anonymous Student Survey
✓	World Café
✓	Teacher Interviews

“Slurs are too normalized. They’re practically treated like swear words in school or social settings.” [World Café]

“Kids make remarks and comments but say it’s funny or just a joke.”
 [Student Anonymous Survey]



Council members Farida Soror, Ben Camber, and Lilian Dupuis present their group’s theme analysis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The council divided into groups to examine the themes and draft recommendations. If three or more groups developed a similar recommendation it is included in this report.

1) Create a clear and consistent policy with guidelines on how to address discrimination across the district ensuring the voice of groups impacted by discrimination are heard and implemented into the writing process of the policy.

Students surveyed and those in the World Café forums specifically requested that a clear anti-discrimination policy be created and supported by a set of guidelines on how to deal with discrimination. Students also expressed a need for this policy to be communicated and shared with students. Furthermore, the Council believes it is important that populations impacted by discrimination are involved throughout the writing process to ensure that the policy and guidelines will be effective.

2) Implement mandatory professional learning for all staff on discrimination with a focus on its impacts and strategies to confront and manage it.

The World Café forums and the student survey responses showed students have expressed frustration about the school system not properly addressing discrimination and further contributing to the problem by holding bias and stereotyping students. Staff interviews showed that teachers were uncertain about how they should be confronting and managing discrimination. It's crucial for all staff to know how to stop discrimination while it's happening, and properly support the impacted individuals.

3) Ensure discrimination is thoroughly explored in the curriculum, including: *Who experiences it? How it is experienced? Where it happens? When it happens? Why it happens? How to address it?*

These components of understanding discrimination should be clearly implemented into the curriculum with attention to Grade 6 Social Studies in particular.

In the World Cafe forums some students said they only learn about discrimination during special events such as Black History Month or Orange Shirt Day. Students wrote that the topic of discrimination gets "skimmed". Additionally, the survey found that academic junctions (Kindergarten, Grade 6) experienced a spike in reported first incidences of discrimination, particularly at the Grade 6 level. Because of this fact, the Council of Student Leaders recommends that education on the topic of discrimination including strategies to address it should be implemented in the curriculum for grade six students -specifically in the Social Studies course.

4) Create a safe space to learn and understand about each other.

In the student survey, all students, even those who hadn't identified having experienced discrimination firsthand, expressed a need to learn more about discrimination. In the World Café forums, students said that discussing and learning about discrimination in the classroom needs to be normalized. Another concern is that students of minority groups and impacted by discrimination had been singled out in class discussions to teach and talk about their culture and experiences. Marginalized students having to teach other students about their experiences could leave them feeling targeted or alienized. To create an open and safe space to hold discussions on discrimination and similar topics, the Council of Student Leaders recommends that willing speakers are brought into schools to share and spark conversations. This approach will not only allow all students to ask questions and learn in a space guided by an adult who has the experience and training to manage it, but also alleviates pressure on students who have had a teaching role thrust upon them.



This year's Council of Student Leaders selected the topic of discrimination without knowing that the previous council had researched diversity and inclusion. These two research topics are very similar. As such, it is clear that discrimination continues to be a prominent issue in schools all across the district.

The Council of Student Leaders urges Anglophone West School District to act on these recommendations. The council is focused on voicing student concerns from the source so that the educators and administrators do not need to guess what problems students are facing, or the types of solutions that the students are looking for. The recommendations are based not just on the experiences of the individual council members but on data collected from 11 schools this year.

The council of student leaders would like to continue their work and progress in the education system. The group feels that the Council is of great importance and poses an incredible opportunity for students to be heard and hopes that it will continue to be offered to students in coming years.

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

2023 - 2024



President – Emmeline Pinnock, Stanley Consolidated School
Vice-President – Lilian Dupuis, Nackawic High School
Secretary – Ashton Little, Harvey High School
DEC Student Representative – Mya McAllister, Leo Hayes High School

Skyler Aubin, Cambridge-Narrows Community School
Lily Foster, Canterbury High School
Alanna Cullins, Carleton North High School
Kiersten Orchard, Carleton North High School
RM, Central New Brunswick Academy
Addison Pollard, Chipman Forest Avenue School
Melika Bagherpour, Fredericton High School
Ali Bent-Richard, Fredericton High School
Mikaya Hoyt-Hogan, Fredericton High School
Purity Moore, Fredericton High School
Ayan Said Hassan, Fredericton High School
Autumn Thompson, Hartland Community School
Jenna McCarthy, John Caldwell School
Leah Stewart, Leo Hayes High School
Lacey Cleghorn, McAdam High School
Alia Caissie, Minto Memorial High School
Jaden Murphy, Oromocto High School
Josiah Hebert, Saint Mary's Academy
McKenna St. Jacques, Southern Victoria High School
Benjamin Camber, Tobique Valley High School
Farida Soror, Woodstock High School

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Nackawic Elementary School
Oromocto High School
Park Street Elementary School
Ridgeview Middle School
Southern Victoria High School
Stanley Consolidated School
Tobique Valley High School
Woodstock High School

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The following guest speakers:

Sarah Francis, Nihkanatpat ciw Skicinowi Kehkiketowaken, Director – Leader for Indigenous Teachings
Matthew Martin (Black Lives Matter New Brunswick)
Ben McNamara (Inclusion NB)

The ASD-W Transportation Team and bus drivers.

Peter McLaughlin and the Second Wind Music Centre for hosting our final banquet.

APPENDIX I

ANONYMOUS STUDENT SURVEY



Student survey on discrimination in schools Feb/March 2024 8th

This survey was designed by the ASD-W Council of Student Leaders 2023-2024. The council would like to better understand your personal and classroom experiences. This will help us to make recommendations to reduce discrimination in schools.

This survey is anonymous. This question is to better understand your responses.

1. What grade are you in?

- Grade 6
- Grade 7
- Grade 8
- Grade 9
- Grade 10
- Grade 11
- Grade 12

These questions will ask you about your general experiences with discrimination.

2. Do you experience discrimination in school?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

3. Please describe how you experienced discrimination with as many details as you are comfortable sharing. Please do not use specific names.

4. At what grade did you first experience discrimination?

- Kindergarten
- Grade 1
- Grade 2
- Grade 3
- Grade 4
- Grade 5
- Grade 6
- Grade 7
- Grade 8
- Grade 9
- Grade 10
- Grade 11
- Grade 12

5. Are you aware of you or your peers experiencing discrimination in these environments?
Check all that apply.

- Online/Social Media
- In school during instructional hours
- In school during breaks or other unstructured times
- Off school grounds and not connected to school activities but not online.

Next we will ask you about how you are currently learning about discrimination at school.

6. Which of the following have you learned about in school? (Check all that apply)

- What discrimination is
- Ways to address discrimination
- Groups of people who have been impacted by discrimination
- The impacts of discrimination

7. Specifically, where and how does your school teach and work to reduce discrimination. Check all that apply.

- Teaching and learning about the histories of different groups of people with reference to discrimination.
- Guest speakers to your classroom on the topic of discrimination.
- Guest speakers to your school on the topic of discrimination (such as an assembly)
- Active student clubs such as GSA, Global Minds, etc.
- Visible anti-discrimination messaging such as posters, flags, murals etc.
- My school communicates policies that deal with discrimination.
- Other

Next we want to know how you think students should learn about discrimination.

9. Which of the following should your school continue or start doing to reduce discrimination? (Check all that you believe are effective)

- Teaching and learning about the histories of different groups of people with reference to discrimination.
- Guest speakers to your classroom on the topic of discrimination.
- Guest speakers to your school on the topic of discrimination (such as an assembly)
- Active student clubs such as GSA, Global Minds, etc.
- Visible anti-discrimination messaging such as posters, flags, murals etc.
- Communicating school policies that deal with discrimination.
- Other

10. At what grade levels should students start learning about discrimination?

- Kindergarten - Grade 2
- Grades 3-5
- Grades 6-8
- Grades 9-12