



Addressing Anti-Asian Racism: A Resource for Educators



Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario

tdsb

Toronto District School Board



Cover Designs and Illustrations

The artwork on the cover as well as throughout this document are components from the specific work of Meera Sethi. She was inspired by Dr. David Suzuki's quote:

"The human brain now holds the key to our future. We have to recall the image of the planet from outer space: a single entity in which air, water and continents are interconnected. That is our home.

Our identity includes our natural world, how we move through it, how we interact with it and how it sustains us."

-David Suzuki

Sethi wished to show a sense of connectedness between humans and everything else in the world: the wind, the oceans, the waterways, the fish and the trees. To invoke diverse Asian identities, she has used patterns, motifs from Asian communities and a maximalist sense of colour from Japanese poster design.

Meera Sethi is a Canadian contemporary artist whose practice encompasses a range of mediums to pose questions about the relationship between migration, diaspora, hybridity and belonging.

meerasethi.com

A message from the Toronto District School Board

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) is pleased to partner with ETFO in the creation of *Addressing Anti-Asian Racism: A Resource for Educators*. The TDSB has been a leading board in addressing equity, anti-racism and anti-oppression. Strengthened by its Equity Policy and the Multi-Year Strategic Plan goals, the TDSB has centred the work of equity and anti-oppression as foundational in our work as educators. The TDSB is committed to an inclusive curriculum, supporting student engagement and delivering effective educator professional learning to help all students succeed.

Anti-Asian racism is pervasive in our society. The current increase in racist attitudes and behaviors towards Asians and people of Asian descent due to the COVID-19 outbreak has negatively impacted the health, well-being and safety of educators, students, families and communities of Asian descent. This resource offers new learnings and innovative actions to ensure immediate changes in learning environments and partnerships with families and communities.

Addressing Anti-Asian Racism: A Resource for Educators provides a foundation for reflection, discussion and social justice action. It was created by a team of educators of Asian descent whose lived experiences, both personal and professional, knowledge and passion for social justice are reflected in its pages. It is our hope that this resource is shared widely and used to build capacity among staff and educators across Ontario to effectively understand, respond, intervene and act when issues of injustice, human rights, equity and oppression arise.

Karen Murray

Centrally Assigned Principal
Equity, Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression
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A message from the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario

Over the last 20 years the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) has been a leader in education initiatives to address inequities in schools and our communities. At the foundation of our work is to build a better future by fighting for equity and social justice. The development of this resource, *Addressing Anti-Asian Racism: A Resource for Educators* is one example of a significant tool developed to support the professional learning of educators as they offer high-quality learning in public schools.

This timely and important resource aims to offer an urgent response to the global virus that has impacted and changed our world. The COVID-19 pandemic has given rise to violence and overt forms of discrimination that has impacted some of Ontario's racialized and marginalized communities. Anti-Asian violence has spiked since this outbreak in 2020 and has affected the mental health, well-being and safety of educators, students, families and our communities. The anti-Asian discrimination resurfacing today has deep historical, colonial roots in this country and this is an urgent time to ensure we end this troubled history of racism.

ETFO in partnership with the Toronto District School Board developed this resource to offer tools for educators to act against racism, to provide support to allies and all ETFO members and to work proactively to address the plague of racism that infects all our communities and schools. This innovative project demonstrates the strength of working together and is one way that our union will continue to work tirelessly to create concrete, systemic change through education and awareness. To do this work of combating racism we need your help and encourage you to not only read and use this resource but to share the tools with others to create change within their lives. Our collective actions can and will make a difference, but we must be resilient.

Sharon O'Halloran

Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario

General Secretary

About the writers



Emily Chan

I was born in Toronto and raised by a community of Chinese Canadian activists. In high school, I taught Chinese Canadian

history to younger grades to fill the gaps in the curriculum. I've worked in the popular education, environmental justice and workers' rights movements in Toronto and New York City. An elementary teacher since 2007, I share my love and enthusiasm for social justice, collaboration and the transformative power of student voice.



Stephanie Cheung

Born and raised in Toronto by parents from Hong Kong and Shanghai, I rarely felt that my identity was

reflected in my learning at school. I later moved to China for two years to teach high school ESL. I earned a Master's in Cultural Studies and Critical Theory from McMaster University and a Master's in Teaching from OISE studying Asian North American literature and culturally relevant teaching practices for English Language Learners. I have been an elementary educator since 2013. I hope this resource inspires educators to empower their students' identities and voices.



Stella Kim

I am a first generation queer Korean Canadian. My parents arrived on Turtle Island or Canada in the late 1970s for reasons that I'm still growing to understand. Identity has always been a struggle for me, a journey of becoming. I am a secondary science and physics teacher who has worked in the TDSB for the past 15 years in various roles. The best part of teaching is listening to and working with students, problem solving with them on how to make schooling more effective, more inclusive and more meaningful.



Melvin Lowe

I was born in Hong Kong and immigrated to Toronto at the age of 8. I am proud of my Chinese-Canadian Heritage and have

been involved with numerous Chinese community agencies within the Greater Toronto Area. I have been a Health and Physical Education teacher in the secondary level with the focus on the importance of physical activity as a social benefit to society. I have been involved with the well-being of Mental Health projects both within the board and in the community. This work has led to awareness of battling systemic racism and providing a voice for all.



Kien Luu

I am a proud Canadian of Chinese ancestry, who grew up in Toronto, of an 11-member household. As refugees, my family

arrived in Canada during the boat people exodus from Vietnam. Canada is my home and in any possible way, I aspire to make a lasting contribution to our nation. It has been an honour to be part of this team of amazing educators to contribute to this resource. I hope this guide will make a lasting impact on changing the equity landscape and inclusion conversations that educators hold within classrooms, communities and continents.



Sangeeta McAuley

As a South-Asian woman educated in Toronto, I maintain strong ties and connections to my family and birthplace in Mumbai, India. I have been an educator for 30 years, using my passion for social justice and anti-racism work to push boundaries with educators and students across the TDSB and Ontario. Acknowledging my complicity as a Brown person, I am honoured to serve students, families and communities as we work together to transform trajectories of the underserved.



Jason To

Born in Hong Kong and immigrated to Toronto at the age of 5, I have grown to embrace my Chinese-Canadian identity.

I've been a secondary mathematics teacher for 12 years with a focus on equitable and inclusive mathematics education. I also work in my educational role, along with various community organizations, to raise awareness and to dismantle the practice of academic streaming as a form of systemic racism.



Mary Tran

I am first generation, Vietnamese-Canadian. As refugees my family arrived in Canada, fleeing Vietnam by boat after the fall of

Saigon, a journey I am still learning about.

I have been an elementary educator for seven years, working in the classroom and centrally. I commit to equitable and inclusive education for all, dismantling systems of oppression to provide a space that uses student identity and voice to drive practice.

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Published December 2020





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