

Your Stories: Anti-Racism

With the guidance of the BCPVPA's Equity Theory of Change, we are exploring the ways in which we can support effective school leadership for racial equity and anti-racism, and support our members with tools and knowledge to deal with racism in their schools.

This story series is a regular feature of *Principl(ed)* magazine, and we invite our members to share the stories of the anti-racism initiatives taking place in their school communities.

In this issue, we share the perspective of **Sylvie Mazerolle** of School District No. 93 (Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique), and we look forward to hearing more from our members and their teams. Contact:

sandra@bcpvpa.bc.ca





Sylvie Mazerolle (elle/she/they)

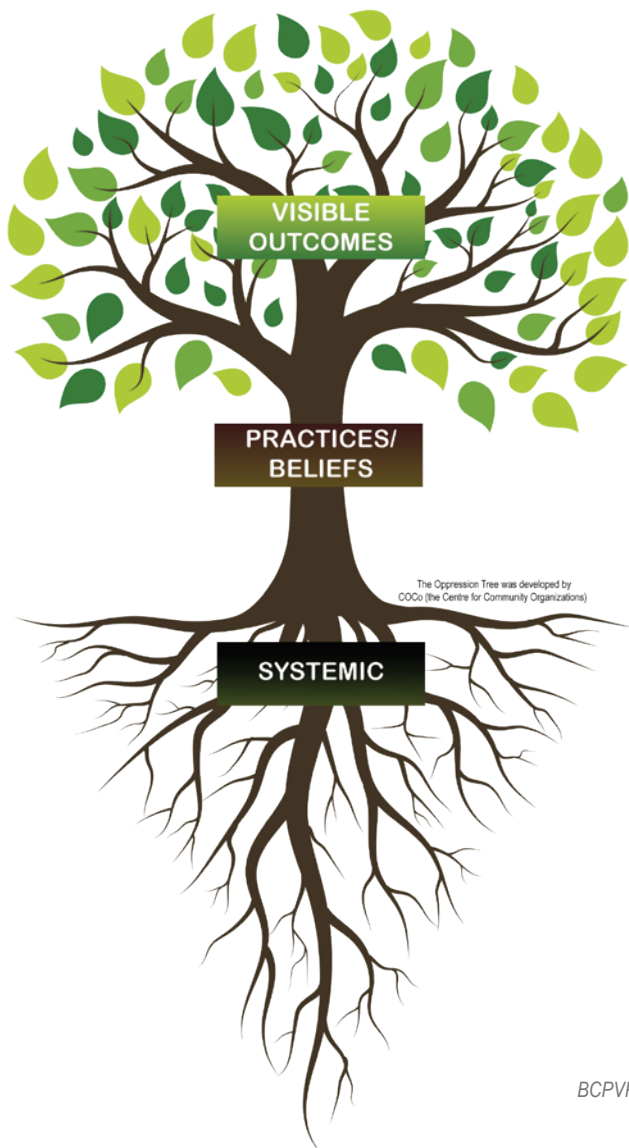
K-12 School Principal

SD 93 (Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique)

Becoming an Anti-Racist School Leader

Introduction

At the heart of education is the potential to transform ourselves, each other, and the world. Within this aspiration for transformative change is the belief that each student, as well as the adults, ecosystems, and communities supporting them, should be able to flourish both in and through education. And yet, education has been – and continues to be – a place of harm for marginalized students, staff, and families. Canada's Indian Residential Schools are a haunting reminder that we must work actively and consciously to listen to Survivors and decolonize education.



So much generous, good work has been gifted to help non-Indigenous folks move towards Truth and the recognition of ongoing racist, white supremacist, and heteropatriarchal colonial harms. As educational leaders entrusted with being school Principals or Vice-Principals, we are called upon to envision, embody, and implement changes – individual, relational, and systemic – that might bring healing to our school communities. How can we tend to such aspirational goals as we navigate the increasing complexities of school leadership? Or, better yet, how can we *not* tend to these goals as leaders empowered to change the lives of children in our educational care?

This goes beyond aspiration, of course. We are mandated to uphold the rights and dignity of each child, to act *in loco parentis*, guided by a potent combination of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) Calls to Action in education, BC's Human Rights Code, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Ministry of Education and Child Care directives, frameworks and anti-racism action plan, and more. Our own Association has included REDI Champion as a goal

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in its 2023-2026 Strategic Plan and has developed a BCPVPA Equity Theory of Change. They have also created an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee, and I am fortunate to have a seat at this table.

My Own Journey

My name is Sylvie Mazerolle, and I am a white-bodied, Queer, Acadian settler who lives on and benefits from the occupied, stolen, unceded, traditional, ancestral, and contested territory of the Sinixt Nation. In my eighth year as a rural francophone school Principal, I am a certified master practitioner in Compassionate Systems Leadership (MIT) with an MA in Curriculum Studies (UBC). In my previous career as a contemporary dance artist, I was guided by the same passion for social justice, care, and healing that I carry with me now as an educator.

I have been on my anti-racism (un)learning journey, belatedly, since June 2020, when George Floyd was brutally murdered by police as the world watched in horror from the confines of pandemic lockdowns. More recently, I have been re-centering the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Declaration of Human Rights in my practice as a school leader and teacher, holding onto radical hope as violence and genocides tear apart the lives of children in so many places in the world.

I am deeply indebted to Black and Indigenous authors and thought leaders, and authors and thought leaders of Colour; there are too many to name, but they include Ibram X Kendi, Layla F. Saad, Ijeoma Oluo, Patrisse Cullors, Jo Chrona, Carolyn Roberts, Arthur Manuel, Rodney Saint-Éloi, Susan Abulhawa, bell hooks, Audre Lorde, James Baldwin, Dr. Eve Tuck, Desmond Cole, adrienne maree brown, and Octavia Butler. Reading their works these past four years has radically (in the sense of "at the root," as Angela Y. Davis teaches us) changed my understanding of leadership in education and my own personal and professional journey towards anti-racism. As Maya Angelou eloquently said, "Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better."

Anti-Racism Initiatives

Several organizations, including the province-wide school district in which I currently work, Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique (CSF) SD93, created anti-racism initiatives in the wake of the assassination of George Floyd. In June 2020, the Board of Trustees enacted an Anti-Racism Working Group, or *Groupe de travail antiracisme* (GTAR). Reporting directly to the Board of Trustees, the working group includes representation from Indigenous leadership, students, parents, support staff, teachers, Principals and Vice-Principals, community partners, board trustees, as well as district representatives. Its mandate has been renewed, and continues.

The working group conducted an equity scan of our school district through Bakau Consulting in 2021. Its report was published by the district in 2022 and confirmed what Indigenous, Black and People of Colour already knew: racism and discrimination are a daily occurrence in our schools and district. The working group immediately took the data to elaborate further recommendations to the board. Two major recommendations have been enacted: the creation of an *Equity and Anti-Racism Director* position within a revised, decolonial organizational chart, and an annual district anti-racism training day, implemented in November 2022.

JOURNÉE SUR L'ANTIRACISME

DÉVELOPPER NOTRE CAPACITÉ DE RÉPONDRE AUX INCIDENTS DE RACISME DONT NOUS SOMMES TÉMOINS

20 NOVEMBRE 2023

XAVIER WATSO

"ON NE PEUT PAS JUSTE SE PERMETTRE DE NE PAS ÊTRE RACISTE, IL FAUT ÊTRE ANTIRACISTE!"

Respect
Réparation
Réconciliation
3R



L'HONORABLE RACHNA SINGH

"NOUS NE DEVRIONS PAS METTRE LE TRAVAIL SUR LES ÉPAULES DES PERSONNES RACISÉES.
NOUS DEVONS TOUSTES ÊTRE DES ALLIÉES FORTES
CE N'EST PAS LE MOMENT D'ÊTRE UN TÉMOIN SILENCIEUX"



F.I.A. (FORMATION SUR L'INTERVENTION ANTIRACISTE)



ET TOI, PENSES-TU ÊTRE PRÊTE À ÊTRE UN TÉMOIN ACTIF?



LA VOIX DES JEUNES ...

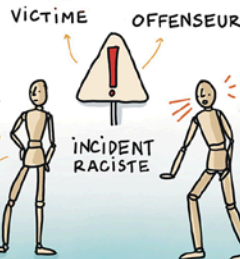
ON VEUT UN IMPACT QUI VA DURER, UN CHANGEMENT DU SYSTÈME

N'AYEZ PAS PEUR DE DIRE **STOP** IMPLIQUEZ-VOUS!

TRISTE INJUSTICE
RÉPARATION PRIVILÈGE
NORME MYTHIQUE OPPRESSION
LES ÉLÉMENTS QUE JE RETIENS DE L'HISTOIRE ET DES CONCEPTS

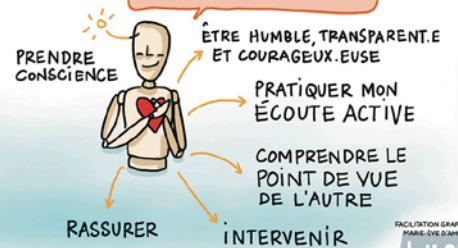


TÉMOIN PASSIF
JE ME SENS MAL À L'AISE ET JE MÉLOIGNE
ANTI-TÉMOIN
JE FAIS COMME SI RIEN NE S'EST PASSÉ



TÉMOIN ACTIF
JE ME TOURNE VERS... ET JE PARLE
TÉMOIN ÉTHIQUE
JE PREND POSITION, JE M'ENGAGE

QUELLE ACTION PRENDRAI-JE DEMAIN?



CSF Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique

ILLUSTRATION GRAPHIQUE PAR L'ÉLITE D'AMOUR L'ILLOT

JOURNÉE SUR L'ANTIRACISME

Déconstruire le racisme systémique
18 novembre 2024

RHIANNON BENNETT

Confronter le racisme et les histoires coloniales

L'ANTIRACISME EST LE TRAVAIL DE DÉPART VERS LA DÉCOLONISATION



ENSEMBLE, BÂTISSONS UNE COMMUNAUTÉ!
Avec de l'amour, de la joie, des liens, des objectifs communs et aussi des conversations inconfortables car il n'y a pas de neutralité vis-à-vis l'oppression



Décoloniser l'histoire, écouter les voix marginalisées et remettre en question les récits dominants, sont des étapes cruciales pour bâtir une mémoire collective plus juste et inclusive

KENZA DERKAOU
BAKAU CONSULTING



"Le privilège blanc ne signifie pas que la vie d'une personne blanche est facile ou dépourvue de défis. Cela signifie simplement que ses défis ne sont pas compliqués par des obstacles spécifiques liés à sa couleur de peau"

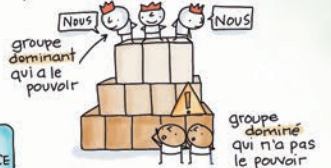


CSF Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique

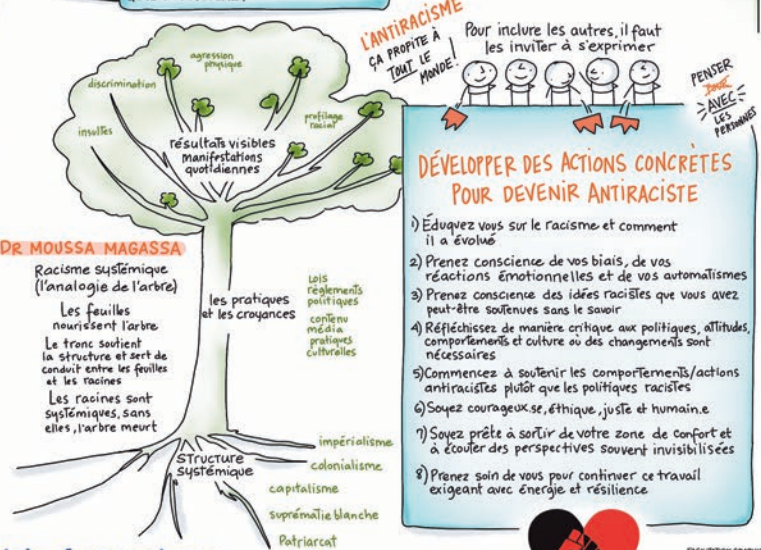
DR GHIZLANE LAGHZAoui

"Moi raciste?!"

le racisme est un système de pouvoir fondé sur la suprématie blanche



AU LIEU DE SE SENTIR COUPABLE, SENTONS-NOUS RESPONSABLE DE CE QU'IL Y A À FAIRE!



DÉVELOPPER DES ACTIONS CONCRÈTES POUR DEVENIR ANTIRACISTE

- 1) Éduquez vous sur le racisme et comment il a évolué
- 2) Prenez conscience de vos biais, de vos réactions émotionnelles et de vos automatismes
- 3) Prenez conscience des idées raciales que vous avez peut-être soutenues sans le savoir
- 4) Réfléchissez de manière critique aux politiques, attitudes, comportements et culture où des changements sont nécessaires
- 5) Commencez à soutenir les comportements/actions antiracistes plutôt que les politiques racistes
- 6) Soyez courageux, éthique, juste et humain.e
- 7) Soyez prêts à sortir de votre zone de confort et à écouter des perspectives souvent invisibilisées
- 8) Prenez soin de vous pour continuer ce travail exigeant avec énergie et résilience



ILLUSTRATION GRAPHIQUE PAR L'ÉLITE D'AMOUR L'ILLOT

During the anti-racism training days, all staff – including on-call staff – are paid to attend in their respective schools. We have been fortunate to welcome an incredible range of speakers, including Elaine Alec (Syilx and Secwepemc), Fabrice Vil, Chanelle Tye, Xavier Watso (W8banaki, Odanak), the Honourable Rachna Singh, Rhiannon Bennett (Musqueam), Dr. Ghizlane Lhaghzaoui, Kenza Derkaoui, and Dr. Moussa Magasa. Necessary, often painful, conversations are happening thanks to these successive anti-racism days and the vital work of the Anti-Racism Working Group. We are grappling with case studies and concepts to help uproot systems of domination and stop the harm of everyday racism.

In my own school community, we acknowledge having to deepen conversations and transform our (un)learnings into actions. Adopting practitioner inquiry to connect theory and practice, we have each read and reflected upon *Me and White Supremacy* by Layla F.

Saad, reviewed our school Code of Conduct using an equity and anti-racist lens, and are dedicating time each staff meeting to continue our exploration towards becoming anti-racist.

The urgency of anti-racism cannot be overstated. The (un)learning must be a life-long commitment embedded in Truth, cultural humility, deep compassion, and continuous action and reflection. As my esteemed anti-oppression sociology teacher at McGill University, Dr. Kimberley Ducey, used to frequently remind her students, “To those that much is given, much is expected.” Those who carry the most privilege benefit from systems of oppression; at the same time, they also carry the most systemic power for radically uprooting systemic racism. As leaders in education, let’s call people in, and call harm out. Together, we must continue the work of becoming anti-racist school leaders.

Recommended Reading

Me and White Supremacy
by Layla F. Saad

Teaching for Black Lives
edited by Watson, Hagopian and Au

A Talk to Teachers
by James Baldwin

Wayi Wah! Indigenous Pedagogies: an Act for Reconciliation and Anti-Racist Education
by Jo Chrona

Re-Storying Education: Decolonizing your Practice Using a Critical Lens
by Carolyn Roberts

Recommended Learning



PDCE UBC
Indigenous Institute



Reconciliation
Education



My Training BC
Anti-Racism Course



Anti-Racism
Microcertificate



PDCE UBC
Reconciliation Through
Indigenous Education



Government of BC
Anti-Racism Education