

Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Committee 2023-2024 Annual Report

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The 2023-24 year was one of growth and accomplishment for Local 38's Diversity, Equity and Human Rights (DEHR) Committee. The DEHR Committee took on and expanded on a number of initiatives and projects during the year, all of which are captured below.

DEHR Chair, Meet Executive Committee

The role of Chair joined both Local 38's Executive Committee and Strategic Planning and Research Committee (SPARC). With this came the invitation and attendance at Fall Retreat, the Annual Representative Assembly, the New Teacher Induction Dinner, and the New Horizons Banquet.

Council of School Representatives (CSR) Engagement

With the DEHR Chair moving onto Executive came the opportunity to speak to the work of the DEHR committee at CSR during committee reports. There were two occasions of CSR engagement that went beyond sharing the monthly report, including the following:

- DEHR responded to the "1MillionMarch4Children" protests that occurred on 2023 September 20 by encouraging CSR members to read the Volume 58, Number 3 issue of the ATA News as it included a section surrounding discussing sexual orientation and gender diversity in schools. To encourage teachers to carve out time to read the paper, three names were drawn to receive a copy of the newspaper and a coffee gift-card.
https://teachers.ab.ca/sites/default/files/2024-05/ATANews-58-3_Digital.pdf
- DEHR responded to the Government of Alberta's announcement on proposed parental rights policy by sharing with teachers that representation matters. Teachers were reminded even the smallest gestures can help 2SLGBTQQIA+ students feel seen and supported during in light of the recent announcement. To support teachers in showing their support, CSR reps were invited to email the Chair to receive a Local 38 Pride t-shirt to wear to school. There was an overwhelming response to this, with approximately 90 CSR members requesting a t-shirt be sent to them.

DEHR Frame of Reference

DEHR made multiple changes to their *Frame of Reference* in order the best support the growth and scope of work that the committee is taking on. Changes to the *Frame of Reference* are summarized below.

- During the initial meeting in September, the committee reviewed the Frame of Reference and voted in favour of changing the committee name from “Learner Diversity and Equity Committee” to the “Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Committee”. This decision was multifaceted, and the committee felt that including the term ‘Human Rights’ in the committee name was necessary and timely in light of the political climate in Alberta. There was also the desire from the committee to have the committee name align with the name used at the provincial level and among other locals across the province.
- The makeup of committee membership changed in order to best support growing work of the committee. Membership increased from a total of nine members to a total of 10 members. The breakdown of this includes a change in membership at large from six members to eight members, with one member at large being the dedicated Antiracist Teachers’ Network Liaison and one member at large being the dedicated Teacher Gender and Sexuality Alliance liaison. The committee chair has moved from being elected from within the members at large and is now elected by the Council of School Representatives. The position of one member of Executive is set to be removed from the *Frame of Reference* at the end of June 2024, as the DEHR Chair is now an official member of the Executive Committee. Finally, the position of District Representative has been removed from the DEHR Committee membership, with the rationale that any of the District Representatives are welcome to join any DEHR meeting, the DEHR Chair has ample opportunity to connect with the District Representatives at the monthly Executive Committee meetings.

Calgary City Teachers’ Convention

To further support and promote the work of DEHR, the DEHR Chair and the Antiracist Teachers’ Network (ATN) Liaison represented the committee at the Local 38 booth in the exhibitors hall during Convention. Time at the booth involved encouraging members to sign up to be entered to win book stacks, handing out pride pins and ATN stickers and bookmarks, and answering questions about DEHR and the ATN.

Scholarships

Three scholarships continue to be offered through Local 38’s DEHR committee including the John Laurie Scholarship, the Black Canadian Scholarship, and the 2SLGBTQIA+ Scholarship. DEHR was pleased to have multiple applicants for each of the scholarships and all three scholarships were awarded to students graduating from the Calgary Board of Education.

Conferences

Each spring, the Alberta Teachers’ Association hosts a Diversity, Equity and Human Rights conference in Edmonton at Barnett House. Six members of Local 38’s DEHR committee and one member of the Antiracist Teachers’ Network Planning Team attended the conference. Three DEHR committee members presented at the conference; S Sheppard presented a session titled *Wrestling with Ableism: Advancing Authentic Inclusivity in Alberta’s Educational Landscape*, S Beech (co-presenting with Local 38 member D Vaast) presented a session titled *Seeing Queerly: Supporting Queer Joy in K-12 Schools* and K Senanayake represented Local 38’s DEHR Committee for the conference’s panel discussion.

- In addition to the DEHR conference, three members of the DEHR committee (A. Dhillon, K. MacAskill and K. Senanayake) attended the sold-out Women in Leadership Conference hosted by the Alberta Teachers’ Association at Barnett House.

Indigenous Education

DEHR was pleased to offer three full-day workshops on Tsuut’ina Nation to learn from Elder Dr Bruce Starlight, Elder Deanna Starlight, and their family members at Brown Bear Woman Events. Twenty teachers attended each session and had the opportunity to explore the topics of beading, history, language, storytelling, and one session included a visit to the Tsuut’ina Nation Culture Museum.

During each sessions, participants enjoyed a break part way through the day to enjoy a potluck lunch together. Feedback provided from participants was positive, indicating “The work outlined by the TRC is happening here. We listened, and we learned from indigenous knowledge keepers” and the committee was asked to “please facilitate more of this type of genuine learning from indigenous knowledge holders”. DEHR is looking forward to planning more sessions for the 2024-25 school year, though the model of how these workshops will run is not yet determined. In previous years, these full-day workshops were offered only on Saturdays, often with lower attendance numbers and increased incidents of non-attenders. In response, the committee piloted running these sessions on instructional days during the 2023-24 school year. There are noted successes and challenges with both models and DEHR will take all information into consideration when planning for the 2024-25 school year.

- Through joining SPARC, the DEHR Chair (and by extension, the DEHR Committee) consulted on and supported the implementation of Local 38’s ReconciliACTION Plan.

Celebrating Calgary Pride

DEHR excitedly started pride weekend by attended brunch at the Hyatt in support of Camp fyrefly and maintained the tradition of selling handmade rainbow toques and scarves. Between the sale of toques and scarves, and the purchase of champagne, the committee was able to donate \$800 to support sending kids to camp.

- The following day, DEHR committee members and members of Provincial Executive Council gathered alongside teachers and family members of Local 38, Local 55 and Local 35 to march in the Calgary Pride Parade. The parade attendees cheered loudly in support of teachers and the message from the crowd was clear: teachers make a difference in the lives of their students.
- DEHR is committed to continuing to march in the Calgary Pride Parade to show their unwavering support for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. The 2024 Pride Parade is taking place on Sunday, 2024 September 1 in the morning. Those interested in marching with Local 38 are encouraged to sign up at the link below. Specific details surrounding meet-up time and place is not available until much later in the summer months; registration will ensure you are emailed the details once they become available. The first 40 individuals to register will receive FREE pride sunglasses on the morning of the parade. <https://s.alchemer-ca.com/s3/2024-Pride-Parade-DEHR-Sign-Up>

Fundraiser – Pins & Post Cards

Following the Government of Alberta’s announcement on proposed parental rights policy, committee members took action to find a way to visibly demonstrate their support for gender diverse students and teachers. The committee, with support of Local 38 staff, designed and ordered enamel pins featuring the transgender flag and the Local 38 apple. Inspired by the actions of businesses and organizations in the community, the committee unanimously agreed that the pins would be sold as a way to raise funds to be donated to Skipping Stone in support of their legal advocacy efforts to combat discriminatory government policies and legislation. A student at Bowness High School supported the work of the committee by designing a postcard to attach to the pins for distribution. Pins are available for purchase for \$5 on Local 38’s Square Site and will be delivered through interoffice mail.

<https://ata38.square.site/product/trans-flag-pin/13?cp=true&sa=true&sbp=false&q=false>

Inclusion Support Network

DEHR is proud to support the development the Inclusion Support Network, a new and developing sub-committee of DEHR. In preparation for the initial meeting, DEHR had the opportunity to poll CSR members using the ‘Feedback in 5’ format to ask the question “what does inclusion look like in your school?” Responses varied and provided the sub-committee with information on the various understandings of inclusion. The Inclusion Support Network had their initial meeting in May 2024

and plan to have one follow up meeting in June 2024 to plan and prepare for the 2024-25 school year. Those interested in joining or learning more about the Inclusion Support Network are encouraged to watch for announcements in Local Lines in Fall 2024 for information on how to attend the monthly meetings.

Anti-Racist Teachers' Network (ATN)

At the initial meeting of the year, the DEHR committee changed their Frame of Reference to include that one member-at-large will serve as the official DEHR-ATN Liaison. Building on this momentum, a Frame of Reference was also created specifically for the ATN in order to set a foundation and framework for the work of the sub-committee. The Anti-Racist Teachers' Network continues to function as a sub-committee of the DEHR committee and has continued the model of hosting monthly meetings and undertaking various projects throughout the year. The ATN has a team of six individuals who serve on the Anti-Racist Teachers' Network Planning Team (ATNPT) which supports the planning and execution of ATN events, resources, and learning opportunities. The ATN continues to have members from Local 38 reach out with concerns and requests for resources and support. Monthly meetings often featured a guest speaker as part of the professional learning workshops. Outside of the workshops, meetings included activities surrounding anti-racism action planning on a school-wide level, discussions on the impacts of the ongoing genocide in Palestine, and other collaborative activities.

- **Professional Learning Workshops** - The ATN coordinated workshops in collaboration with the following organizations: BIPOC Healing and Wellness Centre (Topic: Racism and Mental Health), Black Teachers Association (Topic: Anti-Black Racism), Asian Canadian Educators Network (Topic: Anti-Asian Racism in Education), and Sophia Thraya from the University of Calgary (Topic: Translanguaging and supporting refugee students)
- **An Alberta For All Anti-Racism Symposium** - In February, the ATN collaborated with CBE Diversity Specialists to support the planning and execution of the An Alberta For All Anti-Racism Symposium. Members of the ATN led workshops by division grade level and K. Senanayake was the emcee for the event.
- **CCTCA Session** - Members of the ATNPT planned and presented a sold-out session entitled *Planning Anti-Racist Lessons* to 50 teachers. Feedback from the session was positive and showed that teachers would like to see more workshop opportunities provided and led by members of the ATN.
- **Monthly Dates of Significance** - The ATN continues to create and publish the Monthly Dates of Significance posts for social media. Through shifting this visual to a PDF flyer format, it can now be used as a resource in schools and classrooms. The Monthly Dates of Significance has been well-received by schools across the system.
- **ATN Monthly Newsletter** - Members of the ATNPT continue to publish monthly newsletters, sharing resources for educators within a given theme each month. There have been quite a few members sharing feedback and appreciation for this on-going resource and this is something the ATN looks forward to continuing to create.
- **The Forgotten Voices of Remembrance Day** - In November, the ATN published a special resource publication entitled *The Forgotten Voices of Remembrance Day*. This was a seven page publication that collected a list of websites, videos, lesson plans, and other resources to help educators diversify their Remembrance Day recognitions by bringing together multiple resources in one place. This resource was greatly appreciated by members and was shared across the province.
- **Racialized Staff Affinity Space** - The ATN hosted the first Racialized Staff Affinity Space meeting at the aforementioned *An Alberta for All Anti-Racism Symposium*. It was well received and a productive healing space for those that attended. An ongoing commitment to organize and hold space for this group started in the spring, with meetings taking place in May and June. This will be an ongoing project for the ATN to sustain in future years.

- **Book Study** - The ATN hosted a book club for those interested. The group met monthly between the months of January and May and studied the book *Street Data* by Shane Sfir and Jamila Dugan.

Teacher Gender & Sexuality Alliance (TGSA)

At the initial meeting of the year, the DEHR committee changed their Frame of Reference to include that one member will serve as the official DEHR-TGSA Liaison. Building on this momentum, a Frame of Reference was also created specifically for the TGSA in order to set a foundation and framework for the work of the sub-committee. The Teacher Gender & Sexuality Alliance (TGSA) continues to function as a sub-committee of the DEHR committee and has maintained the model of planning monthly meetings.

- Meetings for the 2023-24 school year have been a mixture of general meetings and events-based meetings. In place of one of the monthly meetings, the TGSA hosted one meeting of the provincially organized Alberta Teachers' Association Teacher Gender and Sexuality Alliance (ATA GSA). TGSA events included Board Games Night at Rising Tides Taproom, Knit Night, Music Bingo, Trivia, and a Year-End Picnic.
- In efforts to support Knit Night and, by extension, the creation of handmade toques and scarves for the Camp fYrefly Brunch, the TGSA put out a call for yarn and held a yarn drive. The TGSA would like to sincerely thank all those who donated yarn and related materials, with a special shout out going to the staff at Louise Dean School for filling the trunk of the Chair's car with bags and bags of yarn.

If you made it this far in the report, congratulations and thank-you. Although lengthy, it is important to highlight the vast and intentional work of Local 38's DEHR Committee. I am incredibly proud to be part of this inspiring, informed, hard-working and high-performing team.

This work would not be possible without the dedication and passion of the committee members and the ongoing support of Local 38 members. A special thank-you to members of Local 38 Office Staff for their support in helping the committee see many of the projects and initiatives through to execution; we truly couldn't do it without you.

Respectfully submitted,

Kalyn MacAskill, Chair
Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Committee

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