

Good evening Trustees,

And thank you for the opportunity to address you.

My name is Pete McKay and I have the honour of representing the approximately two and a half thousand Permanent and Occasional Teachers of the Toronto Secondary Unit of OECTA. Most of you don't know me and you haven't seen me in this seat before. I tend to stay away from the limelight and cameras. But I am here tonight because of the importance of this issue and the fact that you/ we are now at the tipping point where we must act.

The past year has seen us contend with the issue of racism, something the Board has made great strides in addressing. A significant part of this effort is due to the need to include all people in everything we do. No one should be left out because of the colour of their skin.

From a Christian perspective, inclusion is rooted in the life and teaching of Christ. We hear and talk about God's creation and people being formed in his image. That being the case, all of God's people are to be recognized, valued, and loved, whether we like them or not.

From a more humanistic perspective, inclusion is intended to bring about a just world where people are not isolated and not oppressed by the interests of others. Essentially it looks to assist our fellow humans in being their best selves.

These two perspectives dovetail in Catholic Education where we strongly endorse and practice an inclusive pedagogy.

If we are, as a Board to infuse the teaching of our students with inclusive pedagogy, we cannot make exceptions. For many years, 2SLGBTQ+ members of our communities have been isolated and oppressed. They have not been recognized, valued, and loved, and on occasion, even in this room, they have been explicitly devalued.

As we have done in our fight against racism, this year, we must demonstrate that the exclusion of 2SLGBTQ+ people is not acceptable. A simple, symbolic way in which to do that is by recognizing June as Pride Month and raising the Pride Flag at TCDSB buildings.

I urge you to accept the recommendations of your colleagues on the 2SLGBTQ+ Advisory committee to declare June as Pride Month and raise the Pride Flag throughout the TCDSB.

Thank you.