

## URGE SCHOOL BOARDS TO DEVELOP A RACE RELATIONS POLICY

**Sensitivity:** Throughout Canada, many school boards, administrators and teachers are trying to create learning environments characterized by sensitivity, tolerance and respect.

**Room for Improvement:** It appears, however, that this is not true everywhere and that there is need for improvement in the policies and practices of various school boards.

**Lack of Programs:** Attitudes that are detrimental to the fostering of a multicultural learning environment are a major concern of many school boards. There has been modest success in attempting to reduce racial prejudice by changing attitudes. This problem is compounded by the lack of programs available to those whose racial outlook affects the attitudes of many others.

**Behaviour:** It is the feeling of the Committee that changing behaviour is much more efficient than attempting to change attitudes. People, when required to change their actions, often will bring their attitudes into line to avoid inconsistency.

**Goals and Priorities:** It seems obvious that school board policy must reflect the influence of the community of which it is a part. If the board is to change its behaviour, then those responsible for setting community standards must do so as well. Both must agree on a set of goals and priorities that enhance the chances for racial harmony and academic excellence.

**Methods for Accommodating Community Participation:** The Committee calls attention to a model for participation developed by Keith Sullivan of the Atlantic Institute of Education. He developed a set of guidelines for systematically gathering information on the goals of education for four groups: Acadians, Blacks, non-status Indians and status Indians. His study revealed that the four groups agreed on a set of eight goals, although their priorities were different. Such information can assist schools with different clientele to formulate policies and programs with different emphases.

**Other Efforts:** The Committee has also learned of actions taken by school boards in Toronto and Vancouver. The Toronto Board of Education called for a report which investigated the manifestation of racism within the school system, and suggested appropriate action to be taken against it:

A subcommittee on race relations was established.

The subcommittee developed three issue papers on race relations in the school: one for the system, one for the students and one for the community.

Consultations were conducted through city-wide meetings, local area meetings, and visits to secondary and elementary schools.

The Vancouver School Board held a series of public meetings in order to ascertain the wishes of the community on race relations:

### RECOMMENDATION

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