



CCNCTO May 2023 Delegations at TDSB

Spoken delegations by Sally Jin, Amy Zhang, Reola Lee, and Eleanor Yang (speaker was Jessie Tang)

Written delegations by Kennes Lin and Kate Shao (see below)

Name: Sally Jin

Date: May 17, 2023

School: Victoria Park CI

Hello everyone, my name is Sally Jin. I am a Chinese mother with two daughters. My eldest daughter used to study in TDSB, and my youngest daughter is currently studying in TDSB. As an immigrant mother, I feel sad about my oldest daughter's experience at school and regret that I didn't support her enough. Today I want to share with you our experience, and I hope that the TDSB can take action to support Asian students and parents.

大家好, 我的名子是Sally Jin. 我是一名有两位女儿的华裔母亲。我的大女儿曾经在多伦多教育局学校就读, 小女儿目前也在多伦多教育局管辖的高中念书。作为一名移民母亲, 我感到难过我大女儿在学校的经历, 也觉得很后悔自己没有足够支持她。今天我想与你们分享我和我大女儿的经历, 希望各位教委能采取行动支持亚裔学生、家长。

I immigrated to Canada with my husband and eldest daughter in 2005. My daughter was 6 years old at the time. My husband and I were both professionals in China. I was an accountant and my husband taught at a university. But after immigrating to Canada, we can only do labour work. At that time, my husband and I worked in factories every day to earn money, and we didn't come home until 11 o'clock in the evening. My daughter was studying in elementary school in Toronto. There was a period of time when my daughter came home and I found she wet her pants, didn't finish her lunch, and her personality changed from cheerful to depressed.

我与我的先生、大女儿在2005年移民到加拿大。当时我的女儿6岁。我与我先生在中国都是专业工作者, 我是一名会计师, 我的先生在大学教书。但移民到加拿大后, 我们只能做体力活。当时我与先生每日在工厂做工赚钱, 晚上11点才回家, 女儿在多伦多的小学念书。有段时间, 我女儿回家后, 我发现她尿裤子、没有把准备好的午餐吃完, 她的个性也从开朗变成忧郁。

It was only last year that my 24-year-old daughter told me what happened in school back then. She was bullied by her classmates at school, ridiculed for the simple lunch and simple clothes she had, and she dared not go to the toilet, and she dared not eat out at school. As an immigrant child, she was not used to language and culture, had no friends, teachers did not support her, and we as parents did not understand her situation. When she was being bullied and teased, the teacher did nothing about it. As newcomer immigrant parents, we were so busy with work that we didn't have the energy or know how to support her. She remembered the experience at that time until this day, and it also affected her future life.

直到去年, 我24岁的女儿和我说了那时发生的事情。她在学校被同学欺负, 被嘲笑简陋午餐、简陋的衣服, 不敢去上厕所, 她不敢在学校拿出来吃。作为刚来的孩子, 她语言、文化上不适应, 没有



朋友, 老师没有支持她, 我们做为父母的不理解她的情况。当她被嘲笑的时候, 老师没有采取任何措施。作为新移民的父母, 我们忙于工作, 没有精力也不知道怎么支持他。当时的经历, 她都记着, 也影响她未来的人生。

After listening to her sharing, I felt very regretful, and I blamed myself for not realizing that the problem was with the school, and for allowing my husband to be verbally abusive towards her because of her backwardness in studies. When we first arrived, we were busy with work and never questioned the professionalism of Canadian schools. I never spoke to her teacher, I don't know the documents given by the school, and the teacher never reached out to me. I used to think she just didn't adjust to Canada, and I took her to see a lot of psychiatrists. At that time, I arranged some academic activities for her to accommodate my busy life. But I didn't take into account her situation, which caused her to be even more stressed. But it never occurred to me that she peed her pants, skipped lunch, and fell behind in class because she didn't get enough support in school, and my husband and I just blamed her for not trying hard enough. She also didn't share her experience with us, and we didn't notice her depression.

我听了他的分享后感到非常懊悔, 责备自己当时没有发现问题在于学校, 还允许我先生因为她学业的落后, 对她的言语暴力。刚来的我们, 忙于工作, 从来没有质疑过加拿大学校的专业。我从来没有与他的老师谈过话, 我不知道学校给的文件, 老师也没有主动联系过我。我以前以为她只是不适应加拿大, 我带她去看了很多心理医生。在那个时候, 我为了自己忙碌生活的安排, 给他安排了一些课业活动。但没有考虑到他的心情和处境, 导致她的压力更大。但我从没有想过她尿裤子、不吃午餐、课业落后是因为她在学校没有得到足够的支持, 我和我先生只是责怪她不够努力。他也没有和我们分享过他的心情, 我们也没有注意到她忧郁的情况。

After the pandemic in 2019, many parents and students lived together at home. Children did not have enough support, socialization, and both parents and students were stressed. Schools should make sure to pay more attention to and provide more support for children's mental health. While we are entering a new era of post-pandemic recovery, these supports are still necessary to ensure our children can reach their full potential.

2019年疫情开始后, 很多家长和学生需要在家里一起生活。孩子没有足够的支持、社交, 家长和学生都感到压力。学校应该多重视孩子心理的健康。学校要确保对儿童的心理健康给予更多关注和支持。虽然我们正在进入疫情恢复的新时代, 但这些支持仍然是确保我们的孩子能够充分发挥潜力所必需的。

I hope that TDSB can understand the problems that our Asian Canadians community is facing. I want you to understand that the systematic discrimination against Asians, especially the fact that we are a model minority, does not correspond to reality. As immigrants, many parents in the Asian community are working class, we are not rich. We spend most of our time at work, we may need to go back to school to upgrade our credentials, we have little time to spend with our children, and we have no way to afford extra expenses. My daughter, as a 1.5-generation immigrant, needs different support than Asian children born here. She needs to relearn the language and adapt to the environment, but her parents have no time to support her learning



because of our work.

我希望各位教委能理解我们亚裔社区遭遇的问题。我希望你们了解系统性对亚裔的歧视，尤其我们是模范少数族裔是和现实不符的。作为移民，很多亚裔社区的父母是工薪阶级，我们不是有钱人。我们大部分的时间都拿去工作了，我们很可能需要重新回去念书，很少有时间陪伴孩子，更没有办法负担额外费用。我的女儿，作为1.5代的移民，她比这里出生的亚裔孩子不一样的支持，她需要重新学语言、适应环境，同时父母也没有时间支持她的学习。

I feel sorry for my daughter and I hope TDSB can take action to prevent Asian students from having the same experience. It took years before she could share this story with me and it hurts me to think about the harm that was done to her and how she didn't feel supported during and for years after, because it was too hard to speak up. I know that a lot of other youth share this experience and I think it's important for TDSB to prevent experiences, such as hers, rather than just only react to her experience as I tell my story. I hope that TDSB can provide more social workers and settlement personnel who speak our language and understand our culture in schools to help parents participate in their children's learning in schools. Second, I hope TDSB can understand that the Asian community is diverse, and you should fully understand and provide culturally appropriate programs. Third, TDSB should let our children have the opportunity to learn the history and culture of the Asian community in school, and be proud of their own identity and culture. These changes will make sure our community members feel supported but also are important for TDSB to take to address and *prevent* experiences of anti-Asian racism.

我觉得对不起我的女儿，我希望教育委员可以采取行动，避免亚裔学生有相同的经历。她花了好几年才和我分享这个故事，一想到对她造成的伤害，以及她在期间和之后的几年里没有得到支持，我就很难受，因为他要说出来太难了。我知道很多其他年轻人也有这种经历，我认为 TDSB 重要的是要防止发生像她这样的经历，而不是在我讲述我的故事时只对她的经历做出反应。我希望你们能够提供更多讲我们语言、了解文化的社工、安居人员在学校，帮助家长参与孩子在学校的学习。第二，希望你们能了解亚裔社区是很多元的，你们应充分了解，提供文化适宜的项目。第三，让我们的孩子在学校有机会学到亚裔社区的历史、文化，为他们自己的身分、文化感到骄傲。

Finally, I sincerely thank everyone for giving me this time to share their experiences. I sincerely hope that other Asian immigrant children will not repeat my daughter's experience.

最后我衷心感谢大家给我这个时间分享经历。我诚心希望其他移民的孩子，不要重复我女儿的经历。



Name: Amy Zhang

Date: May 17, 2023

School: Agincourt Collegiate Institute

As a first generation Chinese Canadian student, I want to start by recognizing that I am privileged to speak without an accent and grow up in a community where I've been able to access resources that help me meet my needs. While I acknowledge that privilege that I have, I'm aware that this isn't the same privilege that my parents or many others have.

As a first generation Chinese Canadian student, I want to start by recognizing that I am privileged to speak without an accent and grow up in a community where I've been able to access resources that help me meet my needs. While I acknowledge that privilege that I have, I'm aware that this isn't the same privilege that my parents or many others have.

The reason that I am sharing my story today is because my experience is not unique. There are many students, staff, parents, and families in my community who have experienced similar or far worse incidents of anti-Asian racism, hate, and discrimination at the systemic and interpersonal level. But for many of our community members, it's extremely difficult to open up and share our stories. As I share my story, I hope trustees can think about all of those who *can't* or *won't* share their stories because of the barriers they face in meetings, such as this one, and because of other compounding and negative experiences they have had with seeking accountability.

My parents immigrated to Canada in hopes that my siblings and I would be able to receive a better education and live a better life. What they didn't expect was that we'd face other difficulties here, including navigating confusing bureaucratic systems and language barriers. My father used to work as a database admin in China, but when we moved to Canada he was only able to find factory jobs here, because of his English skills. His diploma and work experience have not been recognised in Canada. As well, because of language barriers, when my family were trying to buy a house they were scammed by brokers who targeted recent immigrants who were less knowledgeable about Canada's legal and brokerage system. Witnessing this as I grew up, I recognized that Canada was not always necessarily equitable for *all* and that systemic racism persisted on in various institutions.

When thinking about systemic racism in schools, I had a harder time identifying issues. As the middle child of three, my experience with school has been thankfully guided by my older brother, who so often had to navigate through these confusing systems himself and pave the way for me. On his first day of high school, he didn't know that he would have different classmates in each class. But, on my first day of high school, I did thanks to his experience. However, I recognize that this was unfair for him, because unlike many other peers of mine, whose parents could assist and guide them, my parents weren't able to participate in our school lives in that same way. This was not by their own fault, but because the school neglected to make meaningful changes to ensure that they could participate.



Now that I am in high school, I can see many ways that my older brother shielded me from recognizing anti-Asian racism as pervasive and systemic in my school. As I watch my little brother grow up, I see the many ways that he is not being adequately supported as my parents are excluded from participating in his school life as well.

One area that I see my parents excluded from the school realm is at my little brother's student-teacher conferences. I didn't even realize how common this experience was or question how unfair it was until I began organizing with a local community organization serving Chinese Canadians and discussed it with my classmates. At my little brother's conference, the translator was fully booked and had to leave early because of poor planning on the school's part. Instead, I had to step in to translate for my parents and the teacher. But, if I wasn't present this responsibility would have been placed on my younger brother, who is in grade 3. It is such an unfair task that I know many other youth are assigned to do for their own parents in lieu of professional translators. Seemingly 'small' moments like these continue to reinforce the idea that I'm different or that my parents don't belong in these spaces.

In addition to not belonging in these spaces, other TDSB processes are also inaccessible, including navigating their website and resources. This only works to continue excluding folks like my parents from participation in our schools. I was only recently told that translation options exist on the TDSB website, but without word-of-mouth how would I have known? Even this meeting was one way of sharing my opinion, which I have never heard of before or knew that I could speak at! So when the school asks us, why don't we reach out when we experience issues at school, this is why. Information is purposefully hidden, which makes it increasingly difficult for folks to speak up and ask for change.

When we have to jump through hoops to have our voices heard and when we are often invalidated when sharing about issues facing our community members, since many seem to think acts of anti-Asian racism are 'microaggressions' that are 'not that bad' rather than large systemic issues, it's evident that the school board itself isn't changing and is instead remaining hostile and unresponsive to issues facing racialized, immigrant, and newcomer students and families.

With a significant population of Chinese, East Asian and Asian students and staff at the Toronto District School Board, I hope that the Board of Trustees hears my story and realizes that this is not just me sharing this story today. It is a story that is so common among many folks who grew up like me. Even for me, it was hard to see the ways in which anti-Asian racism is systemic in TDSB, but part of why this type of racism continues to operate is because it works invisibly and is hard to be detected. But if the system is not working for many and is resistant to change, despite the number of newcomers and immigrants in the school board, is that not a sign that the problems we're facing are systemic, rather than individual?



Chinese Canadian National Council

TORONTO CHAPTER

全加華人協進會(平權會)多倫多分會

Chinese Canadian National Council

Toronto Chapter (CCNCTO)

1911 Kennedy Road, Unit 105

Scarborough, ON M1P 2L9

Email: info@ccnctoronto.ca Website: ccnctoronto.ca

As a student, I believe that having more Asian staff, increased training about the issues that Asian students face, and increased supports that are catered to Asian and other diverse students can be the first step to dismantling anti-Asian racism and supporting our Asian students, parents, families, and staff at the TDSB.



Name: Reola Lee

Date: May 11, 2023

Email: reola1114@gmail.com

Hi everyone, my name is Reola Lee and I am a past student who studied at TDSB. I am writing this as a concerned member of the community and a current college student to bring your attention to a matter of utmost importance that demands immediate action: The racism faced by East Asian and Southeast Asian students within our school board.

I would like to share my story here to bring everyone's attention and also inspire other students who might have the same experiences to speak up. As an immigrant who came to Canada to study with my parents, I left all my friends and all my familiar things in my original place. Coming to Canada, I assumed that I would meet some friends in my new school. However, I experienced school bullying and discrimination. As the only Chinese student in my class, I remember being taunted and feeling ostracized because of my identity. I can still remember being pelted with paper balls and subjected to hurtful remarks during a geography class. For a period of time, some of my classmates even moved my desk and chair. Although the teacher witnessed these incidents and reprimanded the students, stating that such behavior was unacceptable and should not be repeated, they still continued to engage in such actions. I was afraid to inform my parents because I knew that they worked very hard and I didn't want to make any trouble for them. It was also difficult because my parents didn't speak English, so they couldn't communicate with my school. Due to language barriers, I didn't know who to talk to. That experience left a deep impact on me and even after many years have passed, I can still remember it vividly. It caused me emotional harm that TDSB has continued not to address or prevent for current and future students. It's my hope that no students in school will have to go through the same experiences I did, especially Asian students, newcomers, and immigrants.

I hope TDSB can understand the discrimination facing Asians students. I also hope that TDSB can recognize the importance of addressing racial discrimination and school bullying. Teachers in my school were never equipped to address anti-Asian racism, and even though they may have tried to do so it was on an individual basis (like speaking to one student in particular). Also, there weren't supports available to me or that I felt comfortable using. How can we expect students to speak up when these incidents only continue to happen and are not addressed at their root, with education? How can we expect students to reach out for support, like going to guidance, which are limited in language capacity and don't always understand issues facing Asian students? This isn't an individual problem, but a problem across the Toronto District School Board.

By not addressing anti-Asian racism in schools, TDSB only undermines the principles of equality and diversity and contributes to an unsafe and hostile environment that does not allow students



Chinese Canadian National Council

TORONTO CHAPTER

全加華人協進會(平權會)多倫多分會

Chinese Canadian National Council

Toronto Chapter (CCNCTO)

1911 Kennedy Road, Unit 105

Scarborough, ON M1P 2L9

Email: info@ccnctoronto.ca Website: ccnctoronto.ca

to thrive academically and socially. These hostile environments in our schools continue to impact youth, like me, even long after graduation.

It is crucial for TDSB to take proactive measures to address this matter promptly. All students deserve an inclusive educational environment that nurtures their growth and ensures their safety, health, and well-being. I would like to request TDSB to consider training sessions for all staff members, including teachers and support staff, to educate them about the challenges faced by Asian students and equip them with the necessary tools (like skills and resources) to address incidents of racism effectively. By providing staff members with these tools, they can actively contribute to creating a supportive and inclusive environment for Asian students. They will be better prepared to address incidents of racism, support affected students and promote a culture of respect throughout the school community. Additionally, efforts should be made to recruit more Asian staff members, increasing the representation of Asian, including East Asian, teachers, who can serve as role models, provide Asian students with someone they can easily relate to and confide in, and who can better understand issues impacting Asian students and families. This will make sure that Asian students don't feel helpless and alone in school and that Asian families can be better supported and build connections with school so they are not excluded.

I strongly urge the school board to prioritize this matter and take immediate action to ensure the well-being and safety of Asian students in order to create better support for them. My story is not unique, but I hope that with more action from TDSB we will hear fewer and fewer stories like mine.



Name: Eleanor Yang

Date: May 17, 2023

Speaking on behalf of the Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter (CCNCTO)

I'm here today with the Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter (CCNCTO). You may recognize us from our work, including our Fight COVID Racism reporting platform that we co-developed during the pandemic and our various community research reports highlighting anti-Asian racism in Canada and systemic barriers facing Asian Canadians.

Our work is centered around our community members and aims to visibilize the invisible nature of anti-Asian racism. That's why over the past few years, CCNCTO has been working with Chinese Canadian students, parents, guardians, and community members to advocate for justice in the education system. We have done so through leadership development for youth and parents, providing accessible information sessions and resources about education to folks, and strengthening our partnerships with stakeholders such as community organizations and school boards. Addressing anti-Asian racism has been identified as a top priority in this process which is why it's necessary for us to have our voices heard.

While the TDSB is celebrating Asian Heritage Month, our community members are demanding more than just 'celebration'. Heritage months are important, but when TDSB designates February Chinese Heritage Month without taking concrete action to advance equity for Asian students, past a celebratory month, our community members question if change will really happen. We cannot highlight Asian folks for this month, and this month only, without acknowledging and also working to combat barriers and inequities that they face.

For the past few years, our Asian community members have experienced disproportionate rates of discrimination, violence, racism, and hate. In 2021 we documented a 286% increase (from 2020 statistics) in anti-Asian racism reports from children and youth under 18, with many incidents being reported in schools. Faced with a drastic increase in anti-Asian racism, where East, Southeast, and South Asian folks have been disproportionately targeted, our community members are asking what's being done to keep our students, staff, parents, and families safe?

Today as I speak, as others have and will be speaking, and many more have submitted written delegations for your consideration, we ask that you pay attention to the issues facing our community members, make space to hear our concerns and solutions, and work with us to dismantle anti-Asian racism. As I share my story, think about all of those who *can't* or *won't* share their stories because of the barriers they face in meetings, such as this one, and because of other compounding and negative experiences they have had with seeking accountability. But today many have been **empowered** to share their stories, because of the community capacity we've helped build.



From my work with Chinese youth, parents, and community members, I've heard numerous stories of persistent bullying, discrimination, harassment, abuse, etc in schools. While some have reported these issues, many have felt disempowered by the lack of action taken in schools to address their issues. And when time and time again they see a lack of accountability, these folks begin to lose trust and faith in the systems in place at schools. In addition to a lack of accountability, often folks' experiences of anti-Asian racism are swept under the rug and dismissed as 'microaggressions' (without regard for their macro consequences). Instead of working to address inequities facing them, our community members are told to create changes in their life to mitigate instances of anti-Asian racism. For example, several of the students in our network have chosen to switch schools and opted to use English names as a way to deal with anti-Asian racism they've experienced.

As an immigrant myself, I have witnessed first-hand the experience of growing up in the Canadian education system. While the effects of systemic anti-Asian racism in schools can be difficult to spot, especially in the moment as a youth growing up around other Asian folks and in a generally diverse learning environment, they are easy to pinpoint as I've grown older. For me, the impacts of growing up in a space where I wasn't represented by staff, where my parents were excluded from school participation, where microaggressions continued to occur but were dismissed, and where Asian folks were constructed outside of the image of 'who is truly Canadian' took a toll on my sense of self. For me, many around me, and many youth that I work with now, I can see how these systemic inequities contribute to internalized racism. They manifest in you *resenting* your families for not "putting in the work" to understand and get involved in your life and school here. They manifest in you separating yourself from *other* Asian immigrants, like newcomers and international students, despite the fact that you know they're struggling and not being supported in our schools. You're Asian, but not one of *those* Asians. You feel *lucky* to have gotten here when your family did or to have grown up here. But as you grow older, you realize that your experience with internalized racism wasn't individual, but something many other folks in the Asian diaspora experienced as well. You recognize that internalized racism and this hit to your self-esteem and self-worth follow you - they're things you have to unlearn.

While I graduated from school years ago, youth today are experiencing similar barriers and issues in their schools. The harm done to me by the Canadian education system did not stop when I graduated, but continues to have a long-lasting impact. Because of how our community members are impacted by systemic racism in other aspects of their life, when you ask things like 'why didn't you report this incident?' or make folks jump through hoops to address accessibility barriers, like contacting multiple administrators to receive necessary translation or interpretation services, you are contributing to and piling onto the many inequities that they already face. You are contributing to making folks feel like it is *their* individual fault and responsibility to overcome systemic barriers and as such you are disempowering our community members.

So we must ask the TDSB, at what point will you stand up against anti-Asian racism? How many



Chinese Canadian National Council

TORONTO CHAPTER

全加華人協進會(平權會)多倫多分會

Chinese Canadian National Council

Toronto Chapter (CCNCTO)

1911 Kennedy Road, Unit 105

Scarborough, ON M1P 2L9

Email: info@ccnctoronto.ca Website: ccnctoronto.ca

folks need to be harmed before action is demanded? We are not alone in our call for change - last year in May our call demanding TDSB to raise an anti-Asian racism motion to combat anti-Asian racism was supported by 13 organizations and experts, including the Centre for Immigrant and Community Services, Hongfook Mental Health Association, the Chinese Canadian National Council for Social Justice, National Association of Japanese Canadians and with academics including Professor Izumi Sakamoto, Professor Lin Fang, and Dr. Mary Reid from the University of Toronto. In addition to East Asian groups, other community organizations serving Asian Canadians, such as the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians, the Tamil Canadian Centre for Civic Action, and Anakbayan Toronto, also signed onto our letter to demand change from the TDSB.

With a significant population of Chinese and Asian students and staff at the Toronto District School Board, we strongly urge the Board of Trustees to take a *proactive* approach to responding to, dismantling, and supporting folks experiencing anti-Asian racism. We are calling for better supports for Asian students' well-being and an increase in TDSB capacities to address anti-Asian racism by working to hire staff, including in senior administrative levels, who are representative of the community; investing in professional development and workshops for educators focused on anti-racism and anti-Asian racism; and initiating changes to the curriculum so that it is representative of the diversity in TDSB classrooms. We are calling for *more than just* the anti-Asian racism resource for educators - we want resources such as this one to be mandatorily implemented but also more action to be taken to take into consideration the perspectives of and issues facing international students and newcomers, who are largely not included in this resource. We are hoping that these calls can be the first step to dismantling anti-Asian racism and supporting our Asian students, parents, families, and staff at the TDSB. And we are looking forward to continuing to work together on these calls.

Written delegations by Kennes Lin and Kate Shao

Name: Kennes Lin

My name is Kennes Lin, Anti-Asian Racism Advisor for the Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter, co-authoring four anti-Asian racism community reports with recommendations linked below. I am also a Registered Social Worker and psychotherapist. I, alongside other community advocates, mobilized nationally to document interpersonal incidents of anti-Asian racism during the COVID-19 pandemic. This tool, *Fight COVID Racism*, is still receiving self- and witness-reports across Canada. It collects and acknowledges all the experiences of anti-Asian racism that would not have met the threshold of evidence to be considered a hate crime.

Anti-Asian racism operates uniquely, creating specific phenomena like the model minority myth, the perpetual foreigner, and the significant number of occurrences of microaggressions. It creates significant doubt in the victim, formulated from the repeated dismissal of the “off” feeling experienced as justifiable mistreatment. Coupled with the stereotype that Asians are well-to-do, it is no wonder anti-Asian racism is seen as unimportant and ignored.

TDSB is the leading and largest school board in Canada, responsible for providing education to also the largest Asian Canadian population in Canada. The recommendations to school board administration, school trustees, and teachers in the report [Another Year: Anti-Asian Racism Across Canada Two Years Into The COVID-19 Pandemic](#) that shows students continue to be targets of racism, discrimination, hate, and violence, documenting a 286% increase in anti-Asian racism reports from children and youth under 18 in 2021, have not been addressed.

Specifically, I highlight two calls that have not yet been addressed by the TDSB:

- #1: “All school boards to disaggregate and strengthen curricular content on past discriminatory government policies and actions, recognizing Indigenous, Black and Asian history and struggles in Canada with key events and specific historical discrimination of Asian Canadian communities should be disaggregated as standalone content” ([CCNCTO and Project 1907, 2022, p. 19](#)).
- #3: “The inclusion of anti-Asian racism as a form of racism in board-wide strategies and action plans on student well-being, equity, inclusion and diversity, effective instruction, and ethical leadership” ([CCNCTO and Project 1907, 2022, p. 19](#)).

When students and families see staffing representative of them, they are more engaged in their learning. Asian educators and administrators have anecdotally told me they “have not even done anything” yet students and families have therefore spoken up and thanked them for their presence. Without addressing the above two calls, Asian students and families continue to be excluded from the foundation of belonging to the school.



Similarly, it is extremely intimidating for students and parents to open up and share their stories, fearing again the helpless dismissal and also the intimidating nature of institutional processes like community consultations - with procedural formalities and English language barriers. I remind trustees to consider those who *can't* or *won't* share their stories because of the barriers they face in meetings, such as this one, and because of other compounding and negative experiences they have had with seeking accountability.

With a significant population of Chinese, East Asian and Asian students and staff at the TDSB, I strongly urge the Board of Trustees to consider creating better supports for Asian students' well-being and increasing TDSB capacities to address anti-Asian racism, including through hiring and training initiatives. We are hoping that this can be the first step to dismantling anti-Asian racism and supporting our Asian students, parents, families, and staff at the TDSB.

Sincerely and in solidarity,

Kennes Lin, MSW, RSW
Anti-Asian Racism Advisor, CCNCTO

Read our community reports:

- [Another Year: Anti-Asian Racism Across Canada Two Years Into The COVID-19 Pandemic](#) showing students continue to be targets of racism, discrimination, hate, and violence, documenting a 286% increase in anti-Asian racism reports from children and youth under 18 in 2021.
- [A Year of Racist Attacks: Anti-Asian Racism Across Canada One Year into the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) documenting the upsurge of anti-Asian racist incidents the first year of the pandemic
- [2020 in Hindsight: Intergenerational conversations on Anti-Asian Racism during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) documenting qualitatively the realities beyond the numbers



Name: Kate Shao

To the TDSB:

I am writing with respect to the Planning and Priorities Committee meeting that is scheduled for May 17, 2023, during Asian Heritage Month. I am a community member, labour lawyer, and part of the Asian diaspora. I have been actively involved in advocacy efforts against anti-Asian racism, including through my work as a former Director of the Chinese Canadian National Council (Toronto Chapter) (“CCNCTO”) Board throughout the years of the pandemic.

My experience with anti-Asian racism is personal and professional. I have been a victim of and bystander to anti-Asian racism and know firsthand the devastating impact of these encounters when left unaddressed. Acts of othering, from blatant name calling to subtle microaggressions, shape the core of one’s identity, which is the most vulnerable and pliable during the school-age years.

As a union-side labour lawyer, I have also seen what racism can do to a workplace. Bullying, aggression, and prejudice can create a toxic workplace, leaving lifelong impacts on workers. Employers have legal obligations to maintain safe and harassment-free workplaces under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. They also have obligations under the *Human Rights Code* to foster discrimination-free environments. These obligations also extend to the classroom.

There is no question that anti-Asian racism exists – in classrooms, on the playground, and on the streets. Anti-Asian racism is ubiquitous. While it has always been there, it became hyper prevalent during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the first year of the pandemic, CCNCTO documented over 1150 incidents of racist attacks on its [Fight COVID Racism](#) reporting platform. That figure continued to grow as the pandemic progressed, disproportionately affecting youth. In the report, [Another Year: Anti-Asian Racism Across Canada Two Years Into The COVID-19 Pandemic](#) (the “Report”), CCNCTO found a 286% increase in anti-Asian racism reports from school aged children under 18.

As home to one of the largest Asian Canadian populations in the country, TDSB holds a special responsibility to address anti-Asian racism. Specific attention must be paid to dismantling anti-Asian racism. The Report cites two calls to action that TDSB has failed to meet:

- #1: “All school boards to disaggregate and strengthen curricular content on past discriminatory government policies and actions, recognizing Indigenous, Black and Asian history and struggles in Canada with key events and specific historical discrimination of Asian Canadian communities should be disaggregated as standalone content” ([CCNCTO and Project 1907, 2022, p. 19](#)).
- #3: “The inclusion of anti-Asian racism as a form of racism in board-wide strategies and action plans on student well-being, equity, inclusion and diversity, effective instruction, and ethical leadership” ([CCNCTO and Project 1907, 2022, p. 19](#)).

Anti-Asian racism is unique and nuanced. It manifests through internalized and externalized stereotypes, such as the model minority myth and the perpetual foreigner archetype and is espoused in numerous forms of microaggressions. These stereotypes lead to a refusal to view



anti-Asian racism as serious or worthy of attention. Coupled with barriers within Asian Canadian communities to draw attention to these issues, such as language barriers or being unfamiliar with one's rights or the TDSB's processes, these issues too often go ignored.

As a result, I call on you to act – on the behalf of the Asian Canadian student population and for the generations to come.

Sincerely,

Kate Shao, JD
Board of Directors, CCNCTO (2018-2021)

CCNCTO's community reports on anti-Asian racism are below:

- [A Year of Racist Attacks: Anti-Asian Racism Across Canada One Year into the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) documenting the first year of anti-Asian racism during the first year of the pandemic.
- [Another Year: Anti-Asian Racism Across Canada Two Years Into The COVID-19 Pandemic](#) documenting the continued racist attacks during the second year of the pandemic, including a 286% increase in incidents targeted at youth under 18.
- [2020 in Hindsight: Intergenerational conversations on Anti-Asian Racism during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) documenting the personal stories behind the numbers.