

Title of Project: Demographic Data and Student Equity

Project Lead: York Centre for Education and Community, York University

Project Partners: Toronto District School Board, Peel District School Board, York Region District School Board (pending approval), Ottawa-Carleton District School Board

Ministry Priority: Equity – Strengthening Research Brokering (Universities/Ontario Partners)

Budget Requested: \$25,000

The Ontario Ministry of Education recently articulated its Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and its vision that school boards across the province ensure that the learning needs of all students are equitably served. Some school boards are already collecting and utilizing demographic data that reduce the achievement gap. Other school boards are currently considering gathering demographic data in order to plan for improved student achievement, attendance, and graduation. But there are challenges to collecting such data. What are the issues behind these challenges? Utilizing knowledge mobilization strategies, this collaborative university/school board project will promote public discussions of the collection and use of demographic data in order to address equity issues in the academic achievement of students, and will act as a catalyst to mobilize research that will influence policy and programs.

This project will involve:

- a) The development of a discussion/status paper that review and synthesizes existing research and practices surrounding the collection and analysis of student demographic data in school boards;
- b) The brokering, creation and mobilization of knowledge through two discussion forums that will bring together stakeholders (school board personnel, community members, teachers, researchers, and academics) for dialogue and sharing on the collection and use of demographic data;
- c) The strengthening of knowledge mobilization and research brokering on this timely issue by harnessing online media (e.g. the creation of a website with some interactive social media features) as a way to both disseminate and create knowledge.

By using knowledge mobilization strategies, this project will identify how demographic data might be collected and might contribute to effective evidence-based educational policies and programs, and enhanced student outcomes.