

Social Justice Begins with Me

BY ADAM PEER

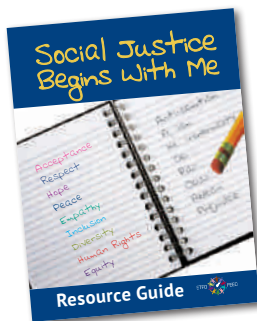
Social Justice Begins with Me (formerly *We're Erasing Prejudice for Good*) is a new literature-based curriculum resource released at ETFO's fall leadership conference.¹

The release occurred at a crucial time: this fall incidents of bullying and youth suicides have received high-profile media attention. This resource will help educators deliver messages of inclusion, diversity, and create safe and welcoming environments. It allows educators to implement the ministry's Equity and Inclusion Strategy, described in ministry documents as "an overarching policy that supports a positive school environment where diversity is respected; systemic barriers and biases are identified and removed so that whatever their personal circumstances, all students can achieve at their highest potential."²

The children's literature that forms the basis for *Social Justice Begins with Me* provides an ideal entry point for developing inclusive classrooms. The resource also promotes the teaching of critical thinking and advocacy skills. As well, it allows students to see themselves and their stories reflected in the curriculum.

Five separate documents make up the kit: one each for Primary, Junior, and Intermediate grades; a Teacher Resource Guide; and a copy of the ETFO resource, *More Than a Play*. The lessons for each division are organized into 10 monthly themes that are linked to the Ontario curriculum expectations. The inclusion of *More Than a Play* helps accomplish the goal of depicting the diverse realities of Ontario students.

ADAM PEER is an executive assistant in Equity and Women's Services at ETFO.



The Teacher Resource contains planners, reproducibles, assessment strategies and tools, reflective questions for equity seeking teachers, strategies for supportive administrators, and hyperlinks to websites (in the CD version). It also has lists of books, Aboriginal cultural organizations, museums, and year-round resources and activities, as well as a section on school and community engagement.

Social Justice Begins with Me is currently available for sale though shopETF0; shopETF0@etfo.org. The \$45 CD includes hyperlinks to websites. The \$65 suitcase contains a print version of each document.

Notes

- 1 Sherry Ramrattan Smith, retired ETF0 executive assistant, initiated this project. It was written by ETF0 members Jill Aoki-Barrett, Niagara; Emily Hastings-Speck, Peel; Jason Schwartz, Thames Valley; and Darla Solomon, Rainy River.
- 2 Ontario Ministry of Education. Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, p. 58. Available at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/EquityInclusive.pdf>



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