

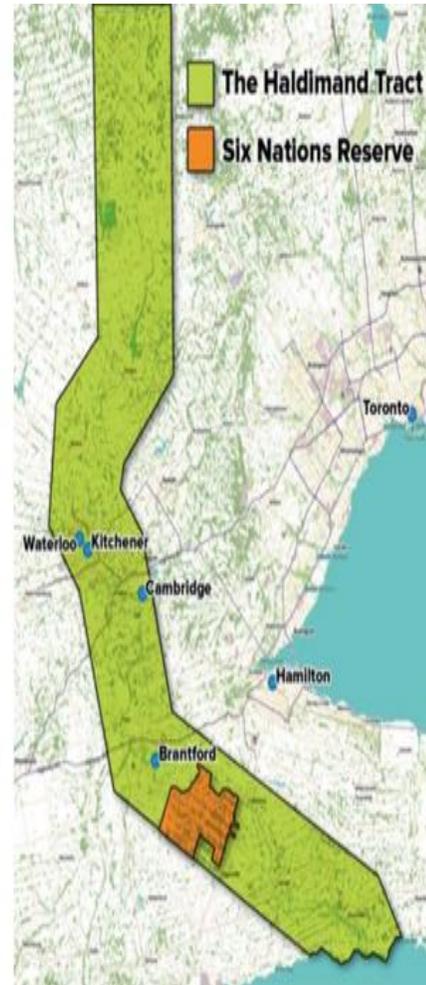
# 2024 EDI&I Coalition Year in Review Report

## Faculty of Education, Wilfrid Laurier University



### Land acknowledgement

We acknowledge that Wilfrid Laurier University and its campuses are located on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, Hodinohsyó:ni (Haudenosaunee), and Neutral peoples. This land is part of the Dish with One Spoon Treaty between the Hodinohsyó:ni and Anishinaabe peoples and symbolizes the agreement to share the land, protect our resources, and not to engage in conflict. Wilfrid Laurier University Brantford and Waterloo, as well as the Kitchener location, are also located on the Haldimand Tract, which was the treaty signed in 1784 that granted the Haudenosaunee Confederacy 10 km on either side of the Grand River, from mouth to source. Today, this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit from across Turtle Island. We recognize, honour, and respect these Nations as the traditional stewards of the lands and water on which Laurier is now present. *We are grateful to have the opportunity to live, learn, work, and play on these lands.*



**Waterloo and Brantford Campuses:** Laurier's Waterloo and Brantford campuses are located on the shared traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishnaabe (Anish-nah-bay) and Haudenosaunee (Hoe-den-no-show-nee) peoples. This land is part of the Dish with One Spoon Treaty between the Haudenosaunee and Anishnaabe peoples and symbolizes the agreement to share, protect our resources and not to engage in conflict. From the Haldimand Proclamation of Oct. 25, 1784, this territory is described as “six miles deep from each side of the river (Grand River) beginning at Lake Erie and extending in the proportion to the Head of said river, which them and their posterity are to enjoy forever”. The proclamation was signed by the British with their allies, the Six Nations, after the American Revolution. Despite being the largest reserve demographically in Canada, those nations now reside on less than five per cent of this original territory.

**Milton Campus:** Laurier's Milton campus is located on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, and part of the Nanfan Treaty of 1701 between the British Crown and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.



**Meaningful Symbols:** Based on the Haudenosaunee creation story, the logo above reminds us of how the first seeds of life on Earth were planted on the back of a turtle. The inner segments of the dome represent the Anishnaabe (Ojibway) Seven Grandfather Teachings: love, respect, wisdom, bravery, truth, honesty and humility. The golden rays of the sun symbolize enlightenment, learning and new beginnings. The Métis beaded purple flower represents the gifts of plant life from the Skyworld, which encourage and sustain life. The entire design rests on the waters of life.

**Mission Statement for Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Indigenization Coalition (EDI&I):** Disrupt, question, advocate, and create change through dialogue, collaborations, partnerships, events, and resources to advance the work of equity diversity, inclusion, and indigenization as a collective coalition within the Faculty of Education and in the larger community.

**LinkTree:** <https://linktr.ee/laurieredii>

**Instagram Account:** [@LaurierEdu\\_EDII](https://www.instagram.com/LaurierEdu_EDII)

**EDII Email:** [edii@wlu.ca](mailto:edii@wlu.ca)

**Resource Bank Webpage:**

<https://www.wlu.ca/Academics/faculties/faculty-of-education/assets/resources/edi-resources-for-educators.html>



# EDI&I Coalition

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION & INDIGENIZATION

Faculty of Education

## Message from the Co-Chair of the EDI&I Coalition

The Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Indigenization (EDI&I) Coalition of Wilfrid Laurier University's Faculty of Education made significant strides in 2024, advancing its mission to disrupt systemic inequities and foster inclusion. Our dedicated members include faculty, staff, teacher candidates, and community leaders who continue to work collaboratively to create impact through various events, initiatives, and partnerships.

This year, the Brave Conversations Series was launched with monthly speakers highlighting insights and discussions around social justice issues. Key initiatives like the annual *Increasing Teacher Diversity Event* continued and welcomed over 90 equity-deserving high school students from the Waterloo school boards inspiring pathways to teaching through storytelling and mentorship. Complementing this was STEMovation, which expanded its outreach, engaging 2,000 participants through hands-on STEM activities designed to demystify STEM careers for under-represented groups. Outreach efforts also addressed systemic inequities in French as a Second Language (FSL) education through the FSL Challenge Fund, successfully supporting the qualification of 63 new FSL teachers since 2023.

Overall, in 2024 the Coalition further deepened its commitment to advocating for and advancing experiential learning, equity-driven research, and community engagement.

To stay connected, visit our [LinkTree](#) and follow us on Instagram at [@LaurierEdu\\_EDII](#).

With love, respect, and gratitude.

Dr. Ardavan Eizadirad (he/him/his)  
Co-Chair, EDI&I Coalition

## Brave Conversation Series

### January 2024 - Brave Conversations Series

Lavorn Hunt and Dr. Crystena Parker-Shandal presented on *Restorative Justice Pedagogy in the Classroom: Building Relational Connections for Student Success*.



**Lavorn Hunt & Dr. Crystena Parker-Shandal**

Restorative Justice in Education and its Theoretical and Practical Application in the classroom

**Virtual Session - Zoom**

Wednesday  
January 31st  
from 11:30am - 12:30pm EST

 **2024 Brave Conversation Series**

In this session, the speakers introduced a framework of Restorative Justice in Education and discussed its theoretical and practical application to building student relationships in the classroom through various pedagogical opportunities. They further discussed how culturally responsive and trauma-informed practices works with restorative justice, and how relational opportunities for building a culture of care and connection can occur through adult-student experiences in schools.

**Access the recording which has been turned into a podcast episode:**

<https://creators.spotify.com/pod/show/edii-coalition/episodes/Brave-Conversations-with-Dr--Crystena-Parker-Shandal-and-Lavorn-Hunt-e2kkl6>

### Recommended Resources:

- Reimer, K., & Parker-Shandal, C. (2023). Restorative justice in education. In Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.1828>
- Parker-Shandal, C. A. H. (2022). *Restorative justice in the classroom: Liberating students' voices through relational pedagogy*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Parker, C. (2020). Who's in and who's out? Problematizing the peacemaking circle in diverse classrooms. In E. C. Valandra/W. W. Hoksila (Ed.). *Colorizing Restorative Justice: Voicing Our Realities*. Living Justice Press.

### Biography of Workshop Presenters:

Lavorn Hunt describes herself as curious, intentional, discerning, and eager to learn. Lavorn holds a Bachelor of Social Work degree and a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Waterloo. Lavorn worked in higher education for over 10 years and has completed practicums at the Toronto District School Board working with students in elementary schools.

Dr. Crystena Parker-Shandal is currently an Associate Professor in Social Development Studies at Renison University College at the University of Waterloo, Canada. As a restorative justice practitioner and researcher, she focuses on how dialogic pedagogies facilitate inclusive spaces where all students can participate and have their voices heard. She is the author of *Restorative Justice in the Classroom: Liberating Students' Voices through Relational Pedagogy* (2022), *Peacebuilding, Citizenship, and Identity: Empowering Conflict and Dialogue in Multicultural Classrooms* (2016), and co-editor of *Finding Refuge in Canada: Narratives of Dislocation* (2021). Learn more at: [www.drparkershandal.com](http://www.drparkershandal.com)

### February 2024 - Brave Conversations Series

Dr. Wonuola Yomi-Odedeyi presented on *Decolonisation of Education, Equity, and Racial Justice*.



**Dr. Wonuola Yomi-Odedeyi**

Educational Leadership and Policy - Examining Pathways for Black and Racialized Female Leaders in Ontario Schools

**Virtual Session - Zoom**  
Thursday February 15, 2024  
from 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM EST

This interactive workshop provided participants with an opportunity to examine limitations of performative allyship and envision an authentic co-liberation journey centered on compassionate accountability. The workshop began by defining key terms. After examining case studies revealing impacts of performative allyship on marginalized communities, participants engaged in thoughtful self-reflection identifying areas for personal growth. At the heart of the workshop was an exploration of promising practices for equity and racial justice grounded in relationship building, power sharing, continuous growth, and decolonizing pedagogy. By the end of the session, each participant developed a personal action plan encompassing a tangible commitment to sustainable allyship and solidarity within their respective roles and spheres of influence.

**Biography:** Dr. Wonuola Yomi-Odedeyi is a Nigerian-born researcher and educator with extensive global experience. Her research explored educational leadership and policy, examining pathways for Black and racialized female leaders in Ontario schools, specifically systemic barriers faced by these women pursuing leadership positions within school boards. Dr. Yomi-Odedeyi's academic interests center on critical race theory, anti-Black feminist thoughts, decolonization, and equity in education. She applies this critical lens to interrogate systemic inequities and advocate for marginalized groups. With over 15 years experience teaching high school at the Halton District School Board, she currently serves as the Experiential Learning Lead. She is also an active member of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation, Vice President of District 20 Halton, and the Chairperson of the OSSTF/FEESO Human Rights Committee. She speaks four languages – Yoruba, English, French, and Portuguese. Her extensive international experience gained through living, working, and traveling on four continents informs her equity-focused research and praxis.

## March 2024 - Brave Conversations Series

Dr. Anna Pearson presented on *Navigating Transformative Pathways: History and the Integration of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion on Experiential Learning Battlefield Study Tours*.



The graphic features a yellow header with a logo of three stylized figures and the text "2023 Brave Conversation Series". Below this is a dark purple background. On the left is a portrait of Anna Pearson, a woman with long blonde hair, smiling. To the right of the portrait, the name "Anna Pearson" is written in white. Below the name is a quote in white: "Navigating Transformative Pathways: History and the Integration of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion on Experiential Learning Battlefield Study Tours." At the bottom right, a yellow circular shape contains the text "Virtual Session - Zoom", "Wednesday March 20th", and "from 4pm - 5pm EST".

Experiential learning (EL) is an immersive pedagogical approach and a powerful means to integrate Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Indigenization (EDI&I) principles into the teaching process. This presentation critically explored this intersection, specifically within the context of one EL battlefield study course *Warpath: The Algonquin Regiment Study Tour*. As participants engaged with the topic, Anna Pearson discussed four fundamental pedagogical pillars integral to history education: historical recollection, memorialization, commemoration, and historical empathy. She outlined ways in which *Warpath* actively confronted systemic inequities, amplified diverse narratives, fostered empathy, and understanding. She concluded by providing practical suggestions and best practices for the integration of EDI&I principles and EL in diverse educational settings.

**Biography:** Anna Pearson holds a B.A. (History), B.Ed. and M.Ed. from Nipissing University. She is currently a Ph.D. Candidate at York University in the Faculty of Education and a Professional Associate at the Centre for the Study of State Violence at Nipissing University. Her research is focused on postsecondary education pedagogy and the practice of experiential learning at historical sites of conflict and commemoration. Anna is a French Immersion teacher at Sunset Park Public School in North Bay, Ontario and was the recipient of the Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence in 2022.

## October 2024 - Brave Conversations Series

Inspector Aaron Mathias of the Office of the Chief of Police, Waterloo Regional Police Service presented on *Pro-Active Policing to Support Youth*.



**Inspector  
Aaron  
Mathias**

Community-Oriented  
Policing: Working Towards  
Prevention with Multiple  
Stakeholders

**Virtual Session -  
Zoom**

Wednesday  
October 16th  
6pm to 7pm EST

 **2024 Brave Conversation Series**

Inspector Mathias discussed the Waterloo Region Police Service's (WRPS) role in the Region of Waterloo Community Safety & Wellbeing Plan, its priorities, and the importance of collaboration across systems and communities to support youth and their families. He highlighted the [Waterloo Regional Police Service Youth Engagement Strategy \(2024-2027\)](#) and the Service's aim to improve service delivery and outcomes for youth in Waterloo Region, including collaborations with various stakeholders.

# Youth Engagement Strategy

2024-2027

## Education & Outreach

Invest in pathways and programs that will improve outcomes for youth.

- Public Safety Awareness
- Engaging Youth Online
- Youth Engaged & Community Connected

## Community & Youth Safety

Create community conditions that will contribute to safety, resilience and wellbeing.

- Community & Youth Engagement Officers
- YCJA Pathways to Diversion
- Prevention and Violence Reduction Initiatives

## Youth Leadership & Development

Sharing in youth-designed initiatives and facilitating community and civic engagement.

- Evaluate and grow existing programs
- Youth volunteer program
- Youth ambassador program
- Support youth-led initiatives

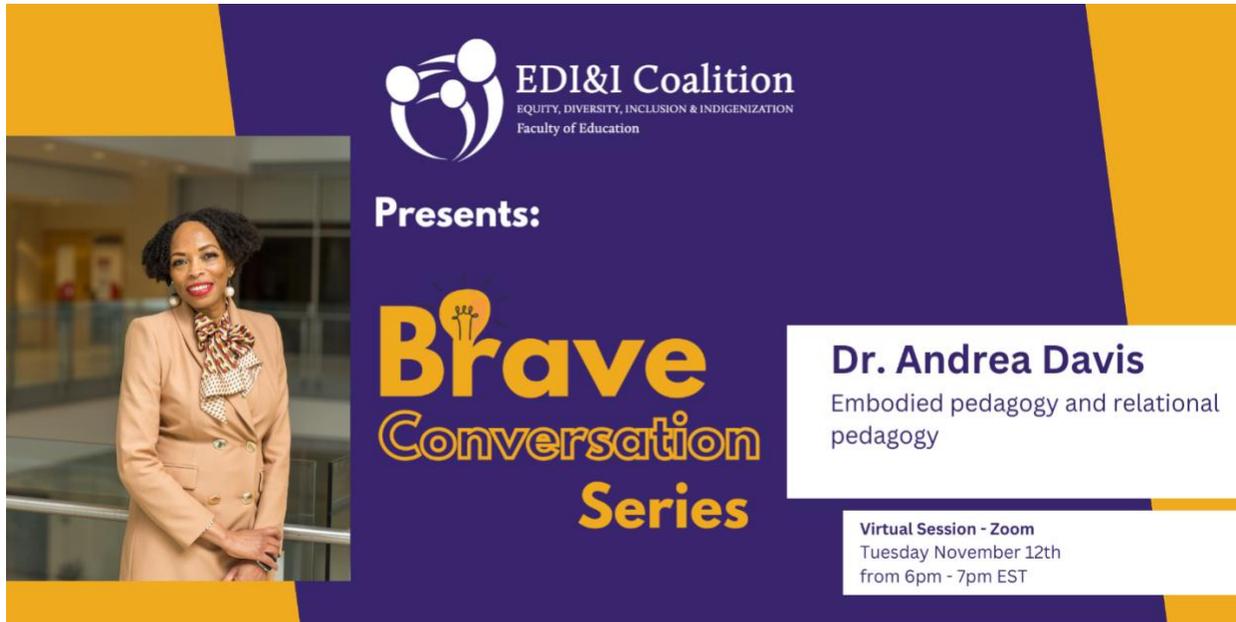
**Biography:** Inspector Aaron Mathias began his career with the Waterloo Regional Police Service in 2006 and currently oversees the portfolio of Community Safety Partnerships. He brings experience from assignments in frontline patrol, school resource, detectives, major crime, and the Waterloo Regional Police Service Wellness Unit. He is currently completing a Master’s degree in Human Rights & Global Ethics at the University of Leicester, holds a Bachelor’s degree in Law and Justice from Laurentian University, and earned a certificate in Psychological Health & Safety from the University of Fredericton. He is a member of the Waterloo Region Alternate Destination Clinic Steering Committee and on the Board of Directors for Victim Services of Waterloo Region.

**Access the recording which has been turned into a podcast episode:**

<https://creators.spotify.com/pod/show/edii-coalition/episodes/Brave-Conversations-with-Inspector-Aaron-Mathias-e2qlfej>

## November 2024 - Brave Conversations Series

Dr. Andrea Davis, Associate Vice-President, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at Wilfrid Laurier University presented on “*Teaching Against Power.*”



The graphic features a purple background with yellow accents. On the left is a photograph of Dr. Andrea Davis, a Black woman with short dark hair, wearing a light-colored blazer and a patterned scarf. To the right of the photo is the EDI&I Coalition logo, which consists of three stylized human figures in white and yellow. Below the logo, the text reads "EDI&I Coalition" in white, with "EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION & INDIGENIZATION" and "Faculty of Education" in smaller white text below it. Further down, the word "Presents:" is written in white. The main title "Brave Conversation Series" is displayed in large, bold, yellow letters. To the right of the title, a white box contains the text "Dr. Andrea Davis" in bold, followed by "Embodied pedagogy and relational pedagogy" in a smaller font. At the bottom right, another white box contains the text "Virtual Session - Zoom", "Tuesday November 12th", and "from 6pm - 7pm EST".

Dr. Andrea A. Davis discussed two approaches that are foundational to her approach as a teacher activist: embodied pedagogy and relational pedagogy. These approaches are grounded in a belief that transformative learning takes place when we disrupt power relations and approach learning as a communal, collective, relational activity.

**Biography:** Dr. Andrea A. Davis is Associate Vice President, EDI and Professor in the Department of English & Film Studies at Wilfrid Laurier University. The recipient of a 2021 3M National Teaching Fellowship, she has a long record as a champion of Black Studies in the humanities and fierce advocate for students. Her book, *Horizon, Sea, Sound: Caribbean & African Women’s Cultural Critiques of Nation* (2022), winner of the Canadian Association of Latin American and Caribbean Studies’ best book prize, imagines new reciprocal relationships among Black, Indigenous and other racialized women, and reflects on the relationship between the Caribbean and Canada.

**Access the recording which has been turned into a podcast episode:**

<https://creators.spotify.com/pod/show/edii-coalition/episodes/Brave-Conversations-with-Dr--Andrea-Davis-e2qu6g1>

## Special Events and Initiatives

### May 2024 - Visit to Woodlands Culture Centre (Former Residential School in Brantford)

The Woodland Cultural Centre (WCC) serves to preserve, promote and strengthen Indigenous languages, culture, art and history by bringing the story of the Hodinohsho:ni people of the Eastern Woodlands to life through innovative exhibitions and programs. It is located at 184 Mohawk Street in Brantford.



On May 23, 2024 the EDI&I Coalition engaged in a one-hour historical tour of the Woodlands Cultural Centre with 10 participants attending. WCC was established in October 1972, under the direction of the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians upon the closure of the Mohawk Institute Residential School (MI). WCC's focus began on collecting research and artifacts, to develop its library and museum collections, expanding to include the arts in 1975 and the language program in 1984. With over 50,000 artifacts in their Museum collection, the Centre is one of the largest facilities in Canada managed and administered by First Nations.

## September 2024 - Launch of the Special Issue on the Theme of “Research as Activism”

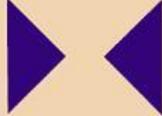
The Faculty of Education’s visiting scholar Dr. Emin Kilinc along with Drs. Ardavan Eizadirad and Jennifer Straub published a special issue for the *Journal of Culture and Values in Education* in June 2024 on the theme of "Research As Activism" which included 12 articles: <https://cultureandvalues.org/index.php/JCV/issue/view/18>.

All the articles are open access and includes various publications by the [Centre for Leading Research in Education \(CLRE\)](#) members including Dr. Avis Beek, Dr. Kathleen Clarke, and Dr. Rebecca Stroud:

- Beek, A., & Straub, J. (2024). Outreach as research activism: Using STEM outreach as a bridge to social change. *Journal of Culture and Values in Education*, 7(3), 130-146. <https://doi.org/10.46303/jcve.2024.32>
- Clarke, K., & Lorenz, D. (2024). Using duoethnography to connect the disability justice principles to education research about disabled populations on campus. *Journal of Culture and Values in Education*, 7(3), 96-111. <https://doi.org/10.46303/jcve.2024.30>
- Eizadirad, A., Jones, D., Leslie, G., & Grant, T. (2024). Remembering lost lives and collective healing from trauma: Homicides, incarceration, and pain-driven advocacy in the Jane and Finch community. *Journal of Culture and Values in Education*, 7(3), 1-26. <https://doi.org/10.46303/jcve.2024.25>
- Stroud, R., Poulin, M., Sohn, J., & Kennelly, J. (2024). Transforming the Canadian Policy Agenda for School-Based Prevention of Youth Homelessness: Research as Activism. *Journal of Culture and Values in Education*, 7(3), 76-95. <https://doi.org/10.46303/jcve.2024.29>

# *Journal of Culture and Values in Education*

E-ISSN: 2590-342X

 **JCVE**  
cultureandvalues.org  
volume: 7 issue: 3 2024

## Forward Thinking EDI Podcast by Laurier

The Forward Thinking podcast serves as a platform where scholars engage in discussions about systemic and historical inequities in the Canadian post-secondary education landscape. Through thought-provoking dialogue, each guest discusses their insights and strategies on embedding equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) into their research and teaching practices. The invited guests elaborate on inclusive research methodologies, strategies, and approaches aimed at dismantling systemic barriers to foster a more equitable and inclusive academic environment.

Listen to Episode 2 of the Forward Thinking podcast by Laurier on the topic of *The Impact of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Teacher Education* with special guest Marguerite Campbell: <https://radiolaurier.com/forward-thinking/>



In this episode, Marguerite Campbell discussed literacy as an equity issue in her work at Wilfrid Laurier University's Faculty of Education working with Bachelor of Education Teacher Candidates and in her experience as an educator with the Toronto District School Board.

## **Increasing Teacher Diversity Event on Waterloo Campus on November 20: Hosted 90 Students from the Waterloo School Boards to Inspire Them to Pursue Teaching as a Career**

The 3rd annual Increasing Teacher Diversity event hosted by the Faculty of Education and its EDI&I Coalition was hosted on November 20, 2024. Over 90 high school students from the Waterloo school boards arrived for a full-day on campus to explore pathways to teaching, engage with equity-driven narratives, and connect with educators, caring adults, teacher candidates, and leaders passionate about supporting them and fostering inclusion in education. The event was a rich day of motivation, storytelling, learning, and connection building with caring adults.



From the powerful Indigenous Circle Opening with Laurier Minor and Ann Marie Beals to thought-provoking panel discussions featuring our incredible teacher candidates, every moment reinforced the importance of representation, equity, inclusion, and belonging in shaping the future of education.

A heartfelt thank you to our amazing partners:

- Ontario Principals' Council
- Waterloo Region District School Board
- Waterloo Catholic District School Board
- Faculty of Education
- FSL Challenge Fund Grant
- STEMovation
- Associate Vice President, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Office

We are also deeply grateful to the 50+ volunteers, faculty, staff, teacher candidates, and student ambassadors who showed up with energy and enthusiasm to create a welcoming and memorable experience for all attendees.



Special thanks to the organizations who hosted engaging booths, including the Centre for Student Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Student Success, Career Centre, Recruitment, FSL, and STEMovation.

Also, a big shout-out to our talented photographers, Pose and Play Photobooth, for beautifully capturing the day's highlights with pictures and the 360 booth.



See link below for an article published in the Waterloo Record on November 21, 2024 written by Jeff Outhit covering the event titled “*Students Want More Diversity in Waterloo Region Schools But ‘It’s Not Happening Fast Enough’*”:

[https://www.therecord.com/news/waterloo-region/students-want-more-diversity-in-waterloo-region-schools-but-its-not-happening-fast-enough/article\\_564ebfb4-f1e0-5b03-a456-858b801ef3a3.html](https://www.therecord.com/news/waterloo-region/students-want-more-diversity-in-waterloo-region-schools-but-its-not-happening-fast-enough/article_564ebfb4-f1e0-5b03-a456-858b801ef3a3.html)

**WATERLOO REGION**

## Students want more diversity in Waterloo Region schools but ‘it’s not happening fast enough’

Teachers are far more likely to be white than their students. School boards agree this is not what they want.

Updated Dec. 13, 2024 at 3:46 p.m. | Nov. 21, 2024 | 3 min read



St. Mary's High School students, from the left, Aisha Bakari, Nyaruey Kang and Sifa Kanyamuneza, attended a seminar this week to promote greater diversity in schools.

Jeff Outhit, Waterloo Region Record

Also see link below for another article in The Cord published on December 4, 2024 written by Madalyn Mostacci covering the event:

<https://thecord.ca/increasing-teacher-diversity-event-held-on-waterloo-campus/>



### **In-Person Event on November 27, 2024**

The Coalition provided an opportunity for coalition members to visit the Waterloo Police Headquarters to learn about proactive and responsive policing.

**EDI&I Coalition In Person Event at WRPS**



**Topics include:** Youth strategy, and supporting schools and communities through prevention

 **Wednesday, November 27, 2024**

 **4:30pm - 6:00pm**

 **Waterloo Regional Police Headquarters**  
200 Maple Grove Rd, Cambridge



**EDI&I Coalition**  
EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION & INDIGENIZATION  
Faculty of Education

# Outreach and Partnerships

## STEMovation



**STEMovation Website:** <https://www.stemovation.org/>

**Instagram:** [@stemovation\\_edu](https://www.instagram.com/stemovation_edu)

**Twitter:** [@STEMovation](https://twitter.com/STEMovation)

The [STEMovation](https://www.stemovation.org/) mission is to create access to high-quality Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programming for children and their families from groups who are under-represented in STEM education and careers. The initiative aims to help children see a place for themselves in STEM now and in the future. All projects are facilitated by our Laurier ‘STEMovators’, students representing the diversity of our community with more than half of the team coming from under-represented groups themselves. There were three projects underway in 2024.

In the winter and fall of 2024, we partnered with the Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB) in Waterloo and the Grand Erie District School Board (GEDSB) in Brantford to pilot a new approach to professional learning. Teachers interested in boosting their coding instruction skills were identified and paired with Teacher Candidates (TCs) who received advanced training in curriculum-aligned computational thinking, coding, and basic robotics. The TCs then made four weekly class visits to lead workshops with the students. The hosting teachers coached the TCs while modelling classroom strategies as the teachers built up their confidence and skills in coding. The project reached 18 classrooms in 2024 and expanding in 2025.



Teacher Candidate Ricky Zhao, Mutual Mentoring, 2024.

In the winter and fall of 2024, we hosted a weekly after school STEM club at [Adventure for Change](#) in Waterloo. Close to 60 elementary school children from the Cedarbrae neighborhood were able to participate. Our team of STEMovators led high-interest, hands-on STEM activities that were designed to be engaging, memorable, and instructive in important STEM process skills.



Teacher Candidate Christina Chiarenza, Adventure for Change 2024.

In 2024, our outreach events served approximately 2000 children and family members across five schools. We also had 32 secondary school volunteers supporting our events who led two training sessions to prepare them for the work. Our successes in 2024 have led to plans for expanded reach in 2025 as we look forward to growing new partnerships across southern Ontario. At each event, families were able to try out up to 20 engaging activities that drew on STEM skills, attitudes, and knowledge. Participants of all ages enjoyed making slime and elephant toothpaste, building mini robots, playing with baby goats and chickens, and much more. Free food, a catchy soundtrack, and the Laurier 'purple and gold' motif created a welcoming, fun-filled vibe that was extremely well received in every community we visited. Each participant and family took home an additional STEM activity so the learning and fun could continue at home.



STEMovation Outreach Team, 2024.

Three research projects are underway to examine the impact of STEMovation. We are investigating mutual mentoring as a novel approach to professional learning for coding, the role of adult family members in influencing children's engagement with STEM, and teacher candidate's experiences facilitating inclusive STEM education.

For more information and to find out how you can get involved in STEMovation, please contact Project Lead at Laurier's Faculty of Education, Dr. Avis Beek at [abeek@wlu.ca](mailto:abeek@wlu.ca).

## **FSL Challenge Fund: Increasing the Number and Proficiency of FSL Teachers in Ontario: A Multi-Targeted Approach for Recruitment and Retention**

FSL Challenge Fund Website: <https://fslteachers.ca/>

The EDI&I Increasing Teacher Diversity event was supported by Wilfrid Laurier University's FSL Challenge Fund which encourages secondary students to consider a career in teaching French as a Second Language. This event was possible thanks to the financial support of the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada under the Canada-Ontario Agreement on Minority Language Education and the Second Official Language Instruction.

Laurier's FSL Supply Challenge Fund's goal is to meet the labour market needs in addressing the shortage of French language educators through the following outcomes:

- Building an awareness of FSL teaching pathways
- Removing barriers to FSL teacher education programs
- Improving flexibility of FSL teacher education programs, and
- Ensuring supportive FSL teaching environments.

Students at the November 2024 Increasing Teacher Diversity event were encouraged to consider a career as a French teacher and introduced to the [fslteachers.ca](https://fslteachers.ca) website through bottle stickers. They were also encouraged to consider participating in our Iboux Academy one-on-one French lessons. This initiative as part of the grant is done in an equity-focused way by maintaining a "risk-free" stance. This means that there is a growth mindset attitude towards participants learning French and meeting them "wherever they may be on their journey." Regardless of level of experience, all students are treated as capable learners of French with the ability to become French educators.

The multitude of events we held (e.g., Teacher Diversity Event, Teacher Appreciation Events in Waterloo and in Brantford, Open Houses etc.) raised awareness of the need for FSL teachers and increased awareness across a broad reach of secondary students and undergraduate students to recognize that anyone who has a keen interest can become a French teacher!

Those enrolled in our Iboux French lessons had access to one-on-one lessons provided free of charge. Overall, we have had 147 participants registered. The FSL Challenge Fund has proved to be quite successful in several areas. Using a targeted approach, it has supported the qualification process for 63 new qualified FSL teachers since 2023. It has also increased the number of future teachers, teacher candidates, and Ontario Certified Teachers actively taking French language lessons to improve their overall language proficiency. The initiative currently has 58 active users of the Iboux Academy language program.

For more information about Laurier's FSL Challenge Fund, please contact [fslteachers@wlu.ca](mailto:fslteachers@wlu.ca)



# EDI&I Coalition

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION & INDIGENIZATION

Faculty of Education

*The Coalition is grateful to the leadership of Dr. Ardavan Eizadirad and Dr. Jennifer Straub as co-chairs of the EDI&I Coalition, with assistance of teacher candidates Katelyn Fong, Chloe Fitzgerald, Mackenzie Tiffin, Michael Yeung, Amanda Gil-Santana, Brookelyn Johnston, Danya Massadeh, Lauren Hales, Rachel Smith, Sunni Carson, and Taylor Good who supported many EDI&I events, projects, and initiatives as part of their alternative placement.*