

So Much Is Happening **Something Significant is Taking Hold**

Since March 4th, when community leaders met with Ottawa-Carleton District School Board officials, much has transpired. Here is a list of some tangibles.

Actions Pursuing Equity, Inclusion and Youth Empowerment in Their Communities and Schools

If you would like to be involved in any of the actions listed below, please email contact@ucyottawa.com and someone will follow-up with you.

1. [A follow-up statement on the March 4th meeting](#) was created and made available through the Uniting for Children and Youth - UCY website. It is essentially a working document.
2. A UCY blog post, "[Something Significant Is Happening](#)," was created to convey that we have a moment to make a difference and we need to seize it.
3. A second meeting of only local leaders was held March 20th. A statement arising from it, titled [Youth Agency](#), is also available through the UCY website.
4. This document, "[So Much Is Happening](#)," has been created and shared as a UCY blog item.
5. **The Equity Ambassadors.** An initiative is underway to create a group of around 8 representatives of diverse identities (communities) to represent their constituency. Each representative/ambassador would understand what their group wants and would bring their community's wishes forward to guide the actions of us all. This initiative is pictured as putting our choir together, "singing one song with many harmonies".
6. **Pursuing the possibilities:** A group will be meeting March 25th to define the benefits of alternate schools and self-directed learning, and to clarify the kinds of pilot programs needed to shed light on how to provide these benefits for all students. See [Youth Agency](#) for more on this initiative.
7. **Pursuing equity:**
 - [2019 Black Students Forum](#): On March 25th the OCDSB will be hosting its forum designed to hear from its black students. It presents a wonderful opportunity to start a sharing of their stories for the benefit of students everywhere. We have people attending who will be looking for ways to help spread the students' stories to give them lasting value. This is the start of an effort to have the stories of all sorts of students shared with others. We have students suffering in silence who don't know how to articulate their pain. It is immensely reassuring for them to learn of others with whom they can identify and to see how they articulate their feelings.
 - [Expanding the Role Models](#): Even today the very vast majority of people pursuing teaching careers are white, successful products of traditional

schooling. It makes public education a white institution in our multicultural society, and it is self-perpetuating – non-white students are less likely to see teaching as a career for themselves when they don't have role models with which they can identify. A group is forming to consider how to address this problem.

8. Promoting youth agency and community

- [Youth Ottawa](#) has done amazing work for young people in Ottawa, and meetings are being held to determine how to support it and expand its programs. [The programs exist](#) so it is a matter of securing the funds to sustain them and to provide for more students to benefit from them. **May 23rd is the date for its Youth Action Showcase** that will be taking place at the Ottawa City Hall (Jean Piggot Place) from 9 am to 11 am. Its purpose is to promote youth voice to key stakeholders and celebrate youth civic engagement projects undertaken through partnerships with all four Ottawa school boards. It will be like a science fair crossed with a speed-dating event, but for civic engagement projects and for matching youth with community leaders and decision makers. See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=7&v=TvwMueV6dPM for a glimpse of what to expect. We are asking people to encourage their school board staffs and trustees to attend the event and to help generate visions of how to take learning beyond the classroom walls and into the community where it can do some good.
- [Ecology Ottawa](#) and partners: We are beginning to see other community groups that are not generally associated with children and youth inviting them to be equal partners in this life, to participate as people with much to contribute right now. Evidence of the contributions they have to make is found with [Greta Thunberg](#) and the youth climate action movement she has created. (See the “It’s Literally Our Future” link below.) Ecology Ottawa, in partnership with CAN-Rac, Just Food, OREC, Ottawa Greenspace Alliance, Ottawa Healthy Transportation Coalition, Sustainable Eastern Ontario, and the Ottawa Peace and Environment Resource Centre, is launching a program March 27th titled [Youth Climate Ambassadors](#). To attend the launch, [register here](#). It is a year long project dedicated to equipping 40 young people from across the city of Ottawa with the skills and knowledge necessary to take on climate change at a local level. The program is designed to cultivate the next generation of environmental leaders, foster deep connections with the diverse range of local actors on climate change, and engage a large number of youth and the general public in youth-driven, peer-to-peer engagement.

9. Citizenship

Efforts are underway to cultivate with young people and adults a stronger sense of what it is to be a good democratic citizen. We have two top experts on citizenship living in our community. One is David Newing, co founder and chair of the United Citizens Initiative- UCI. He recently

published the book titled: [*Global Citizenship in the 21st Century – A Leap of Faith to a Better World*](#). The other is Joel Westheimer, professor and university research chair in democracy and education at the University of Ottawa and education columnist for CBC Radio. His most recent book is titled: “[*What Kind of Citizen?: Educating Our Children for the Common Good*](#).” Ottawa, the heart of one of the world’s strongest democracies with experts like David and Joel in our midst, is the ideal place create an example of how to create solid democracies that can easily withstand the despotic desires of deranged power mongers.

10. **Awareness building:** The Ottawa Public Education Remake Initiative - OPERI and World Youth Matters Media – WYMmedia are in discussions about how to bring to public attention what people are saying and doing about improving the lives of young people. As part of this effort a screening of the soon to be released film “Self Taught” will be provided for the Ottawa public in the fall. This may be turned into an all day conference for youth and include keynote experts and panels with youth who have experienced self-directed learning environments. Plans are being formulated by WYMmedia to hold a national conference, followed later by an international conference to bring world attention to what we can do better for children and youth, and to put Ottawa on the world stage as a true leader in the quest to have the rights of children and youth respected by all.

“It’s Literally Our Future”

http://time.com/5554775/youth-school-climate-change-strike-action/?utm_source=time.com&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=the-brief&utm_content=2019032110am&id=newsletter-brief&eminfo=%7b%22EMAIL%22%3a%22Peza0Al48t4vxcpwN%2biPS96HGpWbRE2a%22%2c%22BRAND%22%3a%22TD%22%2c%22CONTENT%22%3a%22Newsletter%22%2c%22UID%22%3a%22TD_TBR_3B68F118-5A1D-4AD4-897E-E04DE6CC64B5%22%2c%22SUBID%22%3a%22125388608%22%2c%22JOBID%22%3a%22944194%22%2c%22NEWSLETTER%22%3a%22THE_BRIEF%22%2c%22ZIP%22%3a%22%22%2c%22COUNTRY%22%3a%22CAN%22%7d

**Ottawa has much to be proud of.
Let’s help all of our children and youth to be proud of their Ottawa.**