**Discipline for democracy?
School districts' management of conflict and social exclusion**

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Abstract: An examination of six urban Canadian school districts' policies and co-curricular programs for safe and inclusive schools shows contrasting implicit patterns of citizenship education. Peacekeeping-oriented districts relied heavily on standardized control and exclusion to achieve school safety, and allocated few resources to affirming diversity. Peacemaking-oriented districts supplemented peacekeeping with some regularized opportunities for students to learn to manage conflict and diversity. Peacebuilding-oriented districts provided relatively comprehensive and inclusive programs of conflict management and anti-bias education, embracing conflict and diversity as natural learning opportunities. Clearly such system-level policy reflects prevailing understandings of problems that need fixing, not necessarily actual practice. The paper argues that the implicit, daily patterns of human relations and conflict management in school districts are powerful socializers, and powerful constraints on the explicit education for peacebuilding citizenship conducted in individual programs and classrooms.

The current pressures for accountability and 'zero tolerance' discipline foreground the contested question of what young citizens should learn in school. The most egregious impediments to democratic community are overt violence and persistent patterns of social exclusion. While schools alone cannot completely abolish hatred, education can make a difference in reducing intolerance and premeditated hateful behavior (e.g. Avery et. al., 1997; Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Mock, 1995). This paper presents the conceptual framework, and some partial results, of a four-year research project that investigates policies and programs designed to facilitate the development of 'safe' and/or 'inclusive' schools. The context of the study is a few large urban school districts with differently-diverse student populations.

The study focuses on school districts' patterns of implicit and explicit

citizenship curriculum about conflict, violence, diversity and human rights. Explicit curriculum directly teaches students how they should behave. Implicit curriculum socializes students' capacities and expectations of self and others through the models and practice embedded in the diverse ways they behave and are treated in the social system. These patterns form the contexts that shape and constrain the effects of planned peacebuilding citizenship education in classroom social education.

Conceptual framework: citizenship education for conflict and peace

Peace and conflict educators (e.g. Bar-Tal, 2002; Christie et.al., 2001; Deutsch, 1993; Fisk, 2000; Harris & Morrison, 2003; Reardon, 1988) and anti-bias educators (e.g. Banks & Banks, 1995; Bickmore, 2002b; Henry, 1994; Merelman, 1990) often emphasize the importance of values and attitudes as a foundation for justice and peace. How are such values actually learned? Clark McCauley (2002) argues that "feet-first" education (changing actual patterns of behavior and interaction, which disrupts participants' prior beliefs and creates opportunities for developing new understandings) is often more effective than "head-first" education (teaching new attitudes and beliefs in order to change behavior). Reinforcing this insight, research on school desegregation in the United States demonstrates that changing actual patterns of inter-group interaction can cause reductions in prejudice (cited in Aronson, 2000; Cohen, 1984). Thus explicit curriculum presents important opportunities to learn, but less-visible education through human relations patterns such as discipline, access and grouping, and human rights practices may be an even more powerful attitudinal influence.

Control and discipline often remain prominent concerns for teachers and administrators, as novices and throughout their careers. Public pressures for

standardized accountability seem to exacerbate this emphasis on control.

Continuing rapid social and demographic change in North America makes school cultures particularly dynamic and their regulation a particular challenge. The resulting implicit 'feet-first' curriculum of behavior management is an important foundation of students' social citizenship and conflict/peace learning.

Schools in central cities are unique microsocieties that demonstrate the kinds of citizenship education that are possible and needed (Cuban, 2001; Metz, 2002). Urban schools bring together vibrant and volatile combinations of young people, many of them marginalized by poverty, racism, and cultural bias. An appalling undercurrent in some current educational reforms presents certain groups of urban young people as somehow at fault for their own 'failure.' At the same time, inner-city educators delicately balance the demands of maintaining safety (in the face of real frustration, anger, and social fragmentation) with the mission of fostering autonomy, social inclusion, and academic success (in the face of deprivation and standardization). It is probably no accident that the worst sensationalized episodes of youth violence typically have not taken place in inner-city schools, as prevailing stereotypes assume: many urban educators have a special wisdom of practice developed by having handled the challenges of making peace and providing good education (at the same time) under stressful conditions.

Conflict and its management are basic to democracy. Peace and conflict theory describes three basic types of conflict management activity (Curle, 1971; Kriesberg, 1982; Morrison, 2000; Ury, 1999), originally applied to international conflicts and subsequently to interpersonal and inter-group levels in the context of education (Bickmore, 1999, 2003b; Harris 1999). These concepts frame this inquiry into the citizenship education implications of the ways interpersonal and social

conflict is handled in schools:

- Peacekeeping: containment or security approaches
- Peacemaking: dispute resolution, negotiation and dialogue approaches
- Peacebuilding: redress of underlying inequities and social conflicts to restore healthy relationships and/or prevent future escalation of conflicts.

Peacekeeping is the simplest system: it relies upon the narrowest repertoire of strategies for controlling behavior. *Peacemaking* generally includes some peacekeeping as well as conflict resolution. *Peacebuilding* is most comprehensive, because it includes both peacekeeping and peacemaking and adds long-range harm reduction through social reconstruction.

To teach *democratic* citizenship requires a balance of alternatives and protections relevant to diverse populations and situations, and steady attention to teaching the skills, knowledge and values of peacemaking and peacebuilding to staff and students. This study examines contrasting urban school districts' practice to discern which behaviors are treated harshly in the name of peacekeeping, and how else nonviolent skills and behavior, respect across differences, and environments conducive to nonviolent citizen engagement and learning are facilitated.

Peacekeeping: control and punishment for safe schools

Peacekeeping attempts to establish security through control — surveillance, restriction, and punishment of violent behavior. Peacekeeping has a paradoxical relationship to democratic citizenship. On one hand, a measure of safety and security is a prerequisite to democracy, and indeed to education. On the other hand, over-reliance on suppression for peacekeeping can block democratic citizen agency.

In school systems, peacekeeping is reflected in burgeoning emphases on

violence 'prevention' and 'zero tolerance' strict discipline policies, including mandated codes of conduct. Such efforts emphasize short-term control of violence and disruption, generally by punishing or excluding individual students, rather than resolving underlying conflicts or strengthening social relationships. Although statistics indicate that youth violence is actually stable or decreasing in the US and Canada, the prevalence of restrictive and punitive approaches is increasing (American Bar Assn., 2000; Brooks et. al., 2000; Jull, 2000). A widening variety of youth behavior is being criminalized and managed with standardized punishments (also Currie & Covell, 1998). For example, the city of Edmonton, Alberta recently passed a law making "bullying" of children subject to a ticket and \$250 fine (Teotino, 2003).

Top-down security-based discipline relies on limits and punishments that in practice may be disproportionately imposed upon certain populations of students. There is increasing critique of racial, social class, and ethnocultural biases in school-based discipline (Brantlinger, 1994; Johnston, 2000; McCadden; 1998; Sheets & Gay, 1996; Slee, 1995). School policy and professional knowledge do influence the extent of such injustice: for example Callender and Wright describe one school context in which school sanctions position Black pupils as 'other,' and another school that "utilises school and community sanctions as a mechanism for reinforcing a strong, equitable sense of individual and collective identity and achievement" for diverse pupils (2000, p.234). It is paradoxical to hear calls for supposedly-fair one-size-fits-all discipline policies at the very time when the *non*-neutrality (bias) of predominant approaches to discipline are subject to widespread challenge.

As (implicit) citizenship education, peacekeeping approaches emphasize obedience and blaming/excluding those citizens who do not comply with authority.

However, there is significant variation among peacekeeping-type initiatives. Strict discipline does not always concentrate primarily on sanctioning violence. Drug use, theft, property damage, and defiance toward authorities also may be punished as harshly. Strict punishment of such a wide range of behavior may be ineffective or even counterproductive as peacekeeping, because it can fracture relationships and provoke resistance, especially if certain sub-groups of students feel disproportionately targetted (Epp & Watkinson, 1996; Noguera, 1995). On the other hand, where school districts focus their strictest sanctions on violence and bias-based behavior, and implement with a robust safety net of human rights protections and learning opportunities, peacekeeping may provide a foundation for more complex citizenship development (Osler & Starkey, 1998; Schwartz, 2000; Skiba & Peterson, 1999).

Peacemaking: dialogue, conflict resolution and self-governance

Peacemaking attempts to facilitate conflict management and resolution through dialogue and problem-solving rather than blame or punishment. Democratic processes such as legislative governance, class meetings, and student councils are also peacemaking, in that they are designed to facilitate collective deliberation and decision making in the face of citizens' conflicting wants and needs. Other peacemaking education activities, such as controversial issues discussions in classrooms, encourage a sense of agency and the practice of democratic participation capabilities such as dialogue, negotiation, without necessarily emphasizing dispute settlement (Hahn, 1998; Hess, 2002; Houser, 1996).

The major strength of the emerging body of conflict resolution and social skills education programs and resources is its attention to individual students' skill

development, both in stand-alone programs and integrated into academic curricula. Such initiatives have been successful in facilitating the nonviolent management of disputes between children of similar social status, through the development of direct communication or mediation skills and procedures (Bickmore, 2002a; Cunningham et. al., 1998; Jones, 1998). Participation in some peacemaking education initiatives, especially those with broad and equitable student involvement, is also significantly associated with school engagement and academic achievement (Bickmore, 2003a; Johnson & Johnson, 1996).

Active student leadership and service learning initiatives present different citizenship learning opportunities from social skills lessons that are integrated into the curriculum of regular classroom roles. Some peacemaking-type initiatives emphasize conflict avoidance, control of anger, and/or narrow cultural formulas for appropriate social behavior. Other initiatives, such as peer mediation or student governance, delegate tangible responsibility to students: some of these initiatives empower narrow cadres of 'good' students, while others generate more democratic space for diverse young citizens to autonomously manage conflict (Bettmann & Moore, 1994; Bickmore, 2001). Peacemaking initiatives that emphasize dominant culture manners and control have similar goals to peacekeeping. In contrast, initiatives that attend to critical agency and conflict communication across cultural, gender, language, ideological, or power differences create opportunities for democratic citizen engagement (Bergsgaard, 1997; Opffer; 1997).

Teasing, harassment, and bullying are the major mechanisms through which students construct and maintain power hierarchies among their peers (Gordon et. al., 2000). Because of the power imbalance and often embedded social biases that define this kind of conflict and violence, neither peacekeeping alone, nor the

relatively simple approaches in prevailing conflict resolution materials, are sufficient to alleviate harassment and bullying (Larkin, 1994; Stein, 1995). Clearly a measure of peacekeeping is essential to protect vulnerable students from victimization, and peacemaking skill development also can play an important role. At the same time, neither peacekeeping nor peacemaking alone can alleviate the social status competition and bias that underlie bullying and harassment.

Peacebuilding: restoring equitable and resilient relationships

Peacebuilding originated with repairing relationships after incidence of violence, and lately the concept has been applied to rebuilding equitable and resilient relationships at any point in the conflict cycle, through anti-discriminatory problem solving, restorative justice, and inclusive critical citizenship education. Peacebuilding facilitates the deepening and broadening of democratic space by redressing injustice, rights violations and participation barriers. Peacebuilding is based on restoration (repair of relationships), beyond simple dispute settlement and instead of retribution (punishment).

Inequity is strongly related to violence. A recent study based on analysis of 37 countries' achievement and school factors (TIMSS data) shows that school violence levels are more strongly related to school system factors than to the incidence of violence in each society at large (Akiba et. al., 2003). In school systems with higher achievement variation between the most- and least-successful students (due to factors such as tracking or minimal support for 'at-risk' students), teachers and students reported higher rates of school violence and perceptions of threat. If social exclusion and inequity cause frustrations, social fractures, and disengagement that may lead to violence, then equity efforts likely contribute to peacebuilding.

Democratic education that helps students to develop accepting attitudes and a sense of responsibility toward unfamiliar or subordinate national or social groups is peacebuilding (Bickmore, 2003b; Boulding, 1988; Bush & Saltarelli, 2000). Explicit peacebuilding citizenship education in schools is reflected in bias awareness, gender equity, anti-racism, global/international, development, Holocaust and peace education curricula. Implicit learning of peacebuilding is shaped through structural mechanisms for equity and human rights protection. Like other democratic education, peacebuilding emphasizes the development and autonomous implementation of individual and institutional capacities over time. Thus such initiatives can take a long time to show effects, and can be difficult to assess reliably (Horowitz & Boardman, 1994; Kahne, 1996).

As with peacemaking and peacekeeping, peacebuilding-type initiatives are extremely varied. Some (such as many multicultural appreciation exercises) are remarkably conflict avoidant or even assimilationist, whereas others (such as some antiracism, anti-homophobia, and dialogue efforts) openly confront the controversial justice issues that underlie intractable conflicts and violence. The latter initiatives are no more value-laden than any other citizenship education, but their biases (by virtue of contrasting with the status quo) are highly visible.

Study overview

The concepts of peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding help to make sense of the differences and similarities among myriad citizenship-relevant learning opportunities. School district programs and regulations ‘teach’ value-laden roles, responsibilities, and knowledge explicitly and implicitly. This research project seeks to understand what kinds of citizenship might be facilitated through patterns of

practice in school districts — peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding policies, programs, and the resources and staffing designed to carry them out. This paper focuses on policy documents and co-curricular resources for discipline, human rights and equity, and conflict management. Formal classroom curriculum content and practice are equally relevant to any full picture of citizenship education in schools, but beyond the scope of this paper. (The next phase of the study will examine the actual implementation and consequences of both co-curricular policies/ programs and formal academic curriculum, in more depth, in three of the school boards below.)

A caution: as any teacher knows, macro-level policy guidelines are not necessarily closely related to actual practice in schools. However, district-level policies and programs do reflect political will: people develop policy and programs to deal with problems as they understand them. The allocations of resources and effort implied by these policy and program frameworks reflect the concerns and priorities of the leadership and citizens (albeit not all equitably represented) in each school system community.

– INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE --

The cases are six urban public school boards in major cities across Canada, each with a different student ethnicity profile and provincial government context (see Table 1). All of the data were collected from publicly-available documents and websites of the school boards, the six provincial government departments of education, and province-wide teachers' unions. The policy and program environments in the six school districts that have emerged from initial research vary along a rough continuum from relatively strict peacekeeping contexts to relatively equity-oriented contexts that emphasize comprehensive peacebuilding in addition

to peacekeeping and peacemaking. The three pairs of cases below illustrate what the enabling frameworks for citizenship education might look like at three points on this continuum. Peacekeeping and other discipline policies for all districts are summarized in Table 2, followed by brief descriptions of enabling structures for peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding in each of the six districts.

– INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE --

Zero tolerance peacekeeping: Saint John and Toronto

Saint John District 8 includes the largest city (plus some nearby rural areas) of the eastern province of New Brunswick. Its largely ‘white’ population includes approximately 34% French/English bilingual and a few monolingual French speakers; Saint John’s board operates in both languages.

Saint John’s policy documents mandate suspension and expulsion for behavior that is “not tolerated,” and recommend control mechanisms such as “a regular police presence in your school,” “prohibiting book bags and coats in the classroom” to reduce students’ opportunities to bring in weapons, and mandatory removal from school grounds.¹ Only about half of the misbehaviors punished with mandatory suspension involve violence or threat.² While the policy emphasizes general obedience and conflict avoidance more than erasing prejudice, it does identify bias-based violence as unacceptable. Concern with discipline is evident — the topic of nearly all of the many parent information documents. The New Brunswick Teachers Association published a thick resource document on discipline and classroom management in 1999, and identified discipline as the Association’s priority for 2002-03. The board website advertises its internationally known Nonviolent Crisis Intervention program, which involves professional development

for controlling aggressive behavior.

Proactive *peacemaking* educational initiatives are not visible in widely-available school district staffing or program information. Activities to develop “self esteem, communication, social skills, respect for self and others, self control, productive behaviour, peaceful and cooperative problem solving, conflict resolution, and the practice of democratic principles” are recommended, not required.³

Saint John is the only school district in the study sample that had virtually no publicly-evident human rights or equity policies or programs to support *peacebuilding* at the board or provincial Department of Education level, except for passing references to provincial laws that apply primarily to adults. The one small exception is that the New Brunswick Teachers Association has an Equity in Education Committee.

Toronto, Ontario is Canada’s largest city, with a rapidly-growing diverse global population of whom nearly half were born outside the country. The Toronto District School Board is among the largest districts in North America, reflecting the 1996 amalgamation by Ontario’s government of six metropolitan municipalities and (in 1998) their respective school districts. Recent provincial legislation including a mandated code of student conduct, the amalgamation of six sets of board policies, and substantial budget cuts transformed Toronto’s school policy orientation from peacebuilding toward peacekeeping.

Ontario’s mandated Code of Conduct lists as its first purpose, “to ensure that all members of the school community, *especially people in positions of authority*, are treated with respect and dignity.”⁴ The province-wide policy mandates expulsions (exclusion for 21 days or more) and police involvement as minimum consequences for a wide range of offenses, and suspensions for an even wider range of behaviors.

About two thirds of offenses for which expulsion is mandatory, and about one sixth of offenses for which suspension is mandatory, involve violence.⁵ Under centralized provincial policy, the only leeway the Toronto school board has is to add to the list of mandatory punishments: its code of conduct adds suspension for intolerance-based behavior.⁶

The previous Ontario government's 1994 Violence Free Schools Act (not repealed but mainly overridden by the stricter 2000 law) emphasized less punishment, more flexibility, and *peacemaking* as well as peacekeeping: "Provide for students and staff opportunities to develop the skills necessary to handle violent and potentially violent situations. Promote the long-term prevention of violence by preparing students to manage their lives and relationships in nonviolent ways."⁷ A recent policy draft also maintains a small space for peacemaking skill development. It encourages Toronto teachers to handle sensitive issues, although with caution, "within the context of... freedom... to investigate," in environments "in which conflicting sets of values are processed analytically and with respect for the differences in peoples and their cultures, identities, and world views."⁸ However, many programs that supported implementation of this more comprehensive policy have been cut from the Toronto school budget.

There are few consequences for non-compliance and few resources devoted to *peacebuilding* implementation, but the board does have a small Equity Department and an Equity Foundation policy that includes commitments and implementation guidelines in 5 areas: anti-racism and ethnocultural equity, anti-sexism and gender equity, anti-homophobia, sexual orientation and equity, anti-classism and socio-economic equity, and equity for persons with disabilities.⁹ Other policy commits the board to "ensuring that education on human rights issues is provided for all staff

and students.”¹⁰

Thus while both the Saint John and Toronto schools' policy infrastructures emphasize peacekeeping and other strict, punitive discipline, Toronto's peacekeeping regulations are balanced by some safety net of human rights protections and education initiatives.

Assimilation-oriented peacemaking/peacebuilding: Calgary and Vancouver

Calgary, Alberta is a relatively homogeneous but rapidly developing medium-sized city surrounded by rural cattle country in the western prairie region.

Like the boards described above, the Calgary Board of Education's discipline policy forbids a wide range of behaviors, only about 1/3 of them violent. However, in Calgary there are no mandated minimum punishments. Authority is delegated to individual school personnel to set specific conduct policies and to assign consequences that take into account context and individual factors. Board-level policy builds in some human rights protections, such as prohibiting humiliation and discriminatory acts by adults as well as students.¹¹ In discipline, individuals must be treated “in a manner which is demonstrably fair, objective, consistent and reasonable” and abuse of authority by teachers is explicitly disallowed.¹²

The Calgary school district does not rely only on punishment policies. Evident resources are allocated by the Calgary board and the provincial teachers federation to a range of *peacemaking* anti-violence initiatives. For example, about a quarter of Calgary's schools were listed on its website as having some sort of social skills or “bullyproofing” program, in particular one called “Dare to Care” created by Calgary Family Services. The Alberta Teachers Association has been unusually proactive in promoting safe schools activities across the province through a visible

Safe and Caring Schools initiative that supports a range of programs at many schools. Many of these activities seem to tend toward avoidance of conflict more than embracing it as a learning opportunity, but they do place value on, and create space for, teaching peacemaking awareness and skills.

The tools, personnel, and structures for implementing *peacebuilding* equity education are not as evident in the public co-curricular material or the board's administrative departments as the anti-violence initiatives. Board policy does encourage staff development and student programs to facilitate "appreciation of diversity" and "cross-cultural competency" through emphasis on "the contributions of all cultural groups to Canadian history, literature and life," and call for "the maintenance and enhancement of students' heritage language," and the use of language interpreters.¹³ The Alberta Teachers Association has a small Diversity, Equity and Human Rights program that provides resources on inclusivity and anti-racism. Thus the Calgary school district, with the notable support of the Alberta Teachers Association, balances a relatively flexible peacekeeping regime with some peacemaking education initiatives and some foundation for potential peacebuilding.

Vancouver, British Columbia, on the Pacific Rim, is the hub of Canada's second largest urban area, surrounded by various other densely-populated municipalities. Vancouver's School Board represents the city core, not the whole metropolitan area, thus its school board is actually smaller than Calgary's. Like Toronto, Vancouver's population is remarkably global in character, about half visible minorities.

Like Calgary, Vancouver School Board policies forbid a range of violent behavior, but delegate wide discretion to school-level personnel to identify specific offenses and to determine consequences. Unlike in Calgary, Vancouver's policies

focus primarily on forbidding violence (including bias-based violence and hate propaganda), rather than on general misbehavior. Vancouver provides human rights protections such as a code of student rights and responsibilities and the opportunity to appeal to a board-level Discipline Review Committee.¹⁴

The Vancouver board advocates *peacemaking* and peacebuilding, as well as peacekeeping. Anti-violence policies emphasize the importance of proactive education over punishment, discourage the use of violent computer games, and encourage activities “that promote peace and understanding among the people of the world,” including an annual walk for peace.¹⁵ The British Columbia Teachers Federation sponsored a Violence In Schools Task Force that published an extensive report in 1994 and a more recent “Focus on Bullying” document. The union and provincial Ministry of Education co-sponsor a Safe Schools Task Force and a Safe Schools Resource Center that provides conflict resolution education as well as violence-reduction materials. In addition to the annual walk for peace, student agency for peacemaking is encouraged by requiring student councils in all secondary schools and ensuring that 100% of students are eligible for nomination.¹⁶

Somewhat more than in Calgary even though it’s a smaller school district and currently faced with severe budget cuts, the Vancouver board has allocated staff resources to *peacebuilding*. These include Multicultural Liaison Workers who offer student counseling and interpretation in eight languages, 18 First Nations Support Workers, two First Nations Resource Teachers, and an Aboriginal Education Department and Advisory Committee. The board commits resources to multiculturalism and anti-racism, including staff development and non-discrimination “on the basis of race, color, ancestry, ethnic origin, religion, socio-economic status, gender, sexual orientation, political beliefs, physical or mental

ability."¹⁷ Many of these programs seem to emphasize remediation more than anti-bias or inter-group communication, but even this kind of attention to equity may be associated with peacebuilding (Akiba et.al., 2003).

The policy and program infrastructures of the Vancouver and Calgary school districts seem to promote nonviolent and inclusive behavior (albeit sometimes with an assimilatory flavor), rather than heavily emphasizing obedience.

Comprehensive Peacebuilding Infrastructure — Winnipeg and Halifax

Winnipeg, Manitoba is a fairly large city in the northeastern prairie region, with a long-settled population of diverse European origins, a recently-growing population of visible minority immigrants, and an important Aboriginal community (about 25% of the district's students).

As in Vancouver, Winnipeg School Division 1 delegates authority for discipline and punishment to individual school personnel, and emphasizes preventing violence more than other disobedience. Instead of setting minimum punishments, Winnipeg sets maximums. Expulsion is allowed (not required) only for serious violent offenses. Suspension is allowed for other misbehaviors, about three fifths of them violent.¹⁸

Winnipeg's school board explicitly affirms the importance of *peacemaking*. Students and staff are expected to resolve conflicts peacefully and to behave respectfully toward all regardless of diversity, although no consequences are specified for violation of this policy. The district office offers professional development to staff and parents "for development of a climate which fosters positive behavior" through a Developing Safe School Communities program, including a thick Conflict Resolution teaching support manual. Selected students

are empowered to participate in peacekeeping through a School Safety Patrol program: Winnipeg Police officers provide yearly on-site training for student participants and adult advisors at all elementary schools. The Manitoba Department of Education also provides cross-curricular peacemaking resource documents, including Problem Solving and Human Relations.

Peacebuilding is encouraged by Winnipeg's policy advocating "education for full participation in society, education for cultural and linguistic development" including heritage languages, and "education for intercultural understanding" to "assist students in dealing with incidents of stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, and racism."¹⁹ Aboriginal education is a highlighted priority for 2002-03 (other named priorities include "human rights/anti-homophobia"). Board resources are allocated to elementary and secondary-level Aboriginal Education Consultants; supported by provincially-employed Aboriginal Awareness Consultants, they give classroom presentations and assist schools in developing, adapting, and implementing curriculum and instructional materials. Notably, this program emphasizes positive education about Aboriginals across the curriculum for non-aboriginals, as well as educational and social support for Aboriginal students.²⁰ The district's Prince Charles Educational Resource Centre and Community Liaison Officers, supplemented by Provincial Department of Education resources, support several languages of study including two aboriginal languages, and the following cross-curricular topics: Aboriginal Perspectives, Gender Fairness, Appropriate Age Portrayals, Human Diversity, Anti-Racist/ Anti-Bias Education, and Sustainable Development. The Manitoba Teachers Society offers workshops such as Sexual Harassment, Native Studies, Terrorism and Racism, and Confronting Homophobia and an on-going newsletter called *Equality News*.

The Winnipeg school district's priorities seem to focus on infusing inclusive citizenship education across the curriculum, and on facing and handling the conflicts and bias problems that often underlie violence, not merely controlling violent symptoms.

The metropolitan area of Halifax, Nova Scotia, in the Maritimes region, is about half the size of Winnipeg but has a larger public school district (at about the same time as in Toronto, Halifax' municipal government and school board were amalgamated with neighboring municipalities). The dominant population of Halifax (about 90%) is white, mainly of Scots and English extraction. The region also has a strong Black community with a history of discrimination and resistance since the eighteenth century, and a growing immigrant population, especially Arabic/Middle Eastern.

The Halifax Regional School Board's discipline policy is essentially prescribed by the provincial Department of Education. As in Winnipeg, it advocates flexibility and delegates primary authority to school-based personnel, and prescribes maximum rather than minimum punishments. Two thirds of the "severely disruptive behavior" for which principals are allowed to suspend students involves violence. Guidelines emphasize development of understanding and autonomous self-management, consequences chosen "primarily for their educational value," and having students "actively involved in the development and implementation of the school and classroom codes of behaviour."²¹ As in Calgary, Halifax includes strong human rights protections in its discipline framework, including prohibiting teachers' use of academic work or grading as punishment.²² A board-level committee review is mandated for punishments more severe than a five-day suspension. Many or most suspensions are carried out in school and include access to professional

supervision and support.

The Halifax Regional School Board provides tangible evident support for *peacemaking* education. Discipline policy advocates conflict management support such as mentors, peer or professional counselors, psychiatrists, involvement of community agencies, and peer mediation. The board commits to implementing in-service training programs for all staff about pro-social curricula and "the identification, de-escalation, and resolution of conflict," so that "students and staff will learn and practice methods to resolve conflict in a peaceful and respectful manner."²³ The wide range of peacemaking programs offered promote respect for differences and conflict resolution as well as more control-oriented programs such as anger management. The Nova Scotia Teachers Union sponsors an extensive Anti-Violence Resource Library and a range of programs such as peer mediation, Conflict-Free School, Partners for Peace, and peace festivals.

The Halifax school district *peacebuilding* efforts are supported primarily through a prominent Race Relations, Cross-Cultural Understanding, and Human Rights (RCH) department, which "provides opportunities for individuals to learn from one another, to nurture and recognize the talents and abilities of all students and staff... but also to enable all interested partners to gain learning and leadership abilities in this area." This includes programming assistance to specific schools, a RCH and Sexual Harassment School Volunteer program, support for curriculum and program development and in-service training, English as a Second Language support, and review of materials for bias. A League of Peaceful Schools Executive Director's salary is shared by the Halifax Regional School Board and the Nova Scotia Department of Education. League staff and volunteers support comprehensive peacemaking and peacebuilding programs in several Halifax schools (and beyond).

Like Winnipeg, the Halifax Regional School Board seems to have in place quite comprehensive peacebuilding (including relatively non-punitive peacekeeping and, in Halifax, a fairly robust infrastructure for peacemaking) education opportunities for diverse students.

Discussion

Some of the most citizenship-relevant learning opportunities are those conflict management, discipline, and human rights/diversity practices that are taught implicitly through regularized repetition and regulation in urban school districts. The implicit nature of many of these value-laden frameworks makes them potentially powerful influences, precisely because the underlying values are not often discussed nor critiqued.

This research demonstrates that implicit citizenship education practices designed to achieve safe and inclusive schools may differ significantly in various public school contexts. Some of Canada's urban school districts practice strict and narrow regulation of students' behavior, leaving little evident space for enjoying diversity or reducing inequity in the ways conflicts are managed. A wide range of nonviolent disobedience is sometimes treated as harshly as violence. Other districts rely less heavily on standardized punishment of insubordination and instead involve educators and students in various learning opportunities for conflict management and/or appreciation of diversity. There, conflict and difference are embraced as normal aspects of the schools' operations, and learning opportunities.

Some policies seemed to confuse equity (fairness) with equality (one-size-fits-all policies). A conflict management, multiculturalism, or human rights policy that claims to treat diverse people the same embodies assumptions about conflict and

difference that have implications for citizens' relative opportunities. A strict discipline regime that relies on exclusion and punishment for peacekeeping may implicitly communicate the superiority of some students over others, compared to a more intentionally-inclusive peacebuilding regime that balances peacekeeping efforts with inter-group bridge-building and non-punitive conflict resolution. A policy framework that acknowledges both diversity and inequity by teaching anti-sexism and anti-racism and by firmly sanctioning hate-based harassment embodies and teaches different values from a policy that ignores diversity.

Structures encouraging peacemaking learning opportunities did not seem particularly widespread in any of the six school district cases. This is partly because the study is at an early stage and focused on the co-curricular arena; classroom curricula likely provide opportunities for peacemaking-relevant education. However, guaranteed opportunities for active student agency, such as peer mediation or student governance, seemed particularly absent in most of these districts. This is troubling: guided opportunities for active conflict deliberation, peacemaking and peacebuilding are essential to the development of citizenship capabilities, and for actually resolving the conflicts that underlie violence.

Such policies are influenced by the viewpoints and experiences of the particular mix of demographic groups who live there. At the same time, neither the size nor the degree of diversity in a city population are sufficient to explain which of these six city school boards adopted which policy approaches. Educational policies are formulated to handle perceived problems, in response to felt needs and based on prevailing understandings. For example the school boards that built explicit human rights protections into their discipline policies, or offered explicit anti-bias education resources, most likely did so in response to visible problems (rights violations).

Public and professional understanding of what needs to be ‘fixed’ by school policy also is shaped by mass media coverage of violent incidents (including racial and ethnocultural images embedded in such coverage). In the peacekeeping-emphasis school districts, the most powerful voices shaping policy evidently understood the problem of youthful violence and disrespect as rampant and believed the solution was to use force. In other cities, citizens’ groups were able to articulate constructive critiques and positive peacemaking and peacebuilding alternatives, thereby responding differently to similar felt needs about violence.

Clearly some citizens’ concerns are encoded in policy much more readily than others — based on their identity, visibility, political participation, and socio-economic clout. Some policymakers seemed to imagine their school populations were (or should be) essentially homogeneous, and paid little attention to protecting differences among students or to confronting social intolerance. In other cities, such naïve assumptions were rendered impossible by voices raised in popular discourse (for example, recent concern about racial profiling by immigration personnel and police), which seemed to influence policy and program formulations. Thus citizenship educators’ own citizenship action can make a difference in shaping the political will and understanding that in turn shapes school policy. Examining our practices in the macro contexts of our school systems, as well as our words and explicit lessons in classrooms, could help to enhance educators’ clarity and consistency in practicing and promoting education for peacebuilding citizenship.

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² Saint John District 8 Positive Learning Environment Plan 2001, p. 3-4; Student Harassment policy

³ New Brunswick Code of Conduct, Positive Learning Environment Policy, Appendix A.7, revised 2001

⁴ Ontario Safe Schools Act, 2000, section 301 p.2, emphasis added

⁵ Ontario Safe Schools Act, 2000 sections 306 & 309

⁶ Toronto District School Board Student Code of Conduct 2000

⁷ Ontario Violence Free Schools Act, 1994, p.5

⁸ Toronto District School Board Controversial and Sensitive Issues policy (draft), 2003

⁹ Toronto District School Board Equity Foundation Statement and Commitments to Equity Policy Implementation 2000

¹⁰ Toronto District School Board Human Rights policy 2000, p.1 & 4

¹¹ Calgary Board of Education School Discipline policy; Personal and Sexual Harassment policy

¹² Calgary Board of Education School Discipline policy, p.5-6, 9

¹³ Calgary Board of Education Anti-Racism and Equity Policy and Multiculturalism Regulation 1984, p.1-2

¹⁴ Vancouver School Board Student Suspension/Exclusion policy 1977 (revised 1996); Student Code of Conduct 1994 (revised 1999)

¹⁵ Vancouver School Board Violence Prevention policy 1995 (rev.1999), p.1; Hate Crimes and Propaganda 1991 (rev.1999), Equal Educational Opportunities policy 1978 (rev.1999); Activities Promoting Peace policy 1986 (rev.1999), p.1

¹⁶ Vancouver School Board Student Government policy 1974 (rev.1999)

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¹⁸ Winnipeg School Division 1 Code of Conduct in Discipline Policy 1988; Suspension of Students Policy 1992; Expulsion of Students Policy 1986

¹⁹ Winnipeg School Division 1 Multicultural Education policy 1988 (revised 1992), p.2; Heritage Language Instruction and Curriculum Integration

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²¹ Halifax Regional School Board Student Behavior and Discipline Policy 1997, p.1, 2, 6, 8); Nova Scotia Department of Education School Code of Conduct 2001.

²² Halifax Regional School Board Student Behaviour and Discipline policy p.7, 10, 16

²³ Halifax Regional School Board Safe, Secure, and Healthy Schools policy 2002