



CSBA Board Self-Assessment on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Introduction

The CSBA Board was asked to complete an anonymous self-assessment survey that served as an equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) guided review of four areas of the CSBA Board areas of practice: governance, finance, communications and human resources.

Within each area, feedback was structured in three stages of EDI development: emerging, developing and transforming. Progress through the stages suggests that the CSBA is moving closer to fully integrating equity, diversity and inclusion within its work.

- **Stage 1: Emerging** - At this stage, the Association is beginning to recognize EDI as strategic priorities and is building buy-in for the effort.
- **Stage 2: Developing** - At this stage, the Association is focused on ensuring the development of its institutional and individual competence and capacity to sustain the EDI effort.
- **Stage 3: Transforming** - At this stage, the Association has fully institutionalized EDI into the fabric of its institution, and continues to assess its efforts and effectiveness to ensure progress and sustainability. This is not a static stage. To remain at the transforming stage requires continuous work.

The results of the self-assessment were shared at a virtual gathering with opportunities for the Board to discuss their reflections from the self-assessment, as well as the actions needed to create transformation within the organization.

Definitions

For the self-assessment, all references to the terms equity, diversity and inclusion are based on the following definitions, which are embedded within the CSBA Acknowledgement on Equity and Diversity that was ratified on May 17, 2021.

- **Equity** refers to achieving parity in policy, process and outcomes for historically and/or currently underrepresented and/or marginalized people and groups. Achieving equity for all requires intentional work on both policy and practice by removing systemic barriers and exposing and addressing biases.
- **Diversity** means the differences in the lived experiences and perspectives of people that may include race, colour, place of origin, first language, religion, immigrant and newcomer status, ethnic origin, ability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, family status, age and socio-economic conditions.

- **Inclusion** is an active, intentional, and continuous process to address inequities in power and privilege and build a respectful and diverse community that creates welcoming spaces and opportunities to flourish for all.

What we heard

Opening Circle

Board members shared their motivation and sentiments towards this anti-racism initiative at the beginning of the session. For some, recent events have raised their consciousness about the important role public education plays in addressing the effects of systemic racism. For these Board members, their expressed interest and enthusiasm lies in acquiring tools and skills needed to operate in more equitable and inclusive ways. For others, the pursuit of greater equity, diversity and inclusion has been a lifelong calling and while they welcome the recent shifts to more fully address institutionalized racism, they are also tired of being called upon to act as agents of change. In some cases, enormous emotional and professional investment have yielded insufficient change over long periods of time. However, all members present shared a common commitment to undertaking the work needed to become a more equitable, diverse and inclusive organization.

Reflections on the Self-Assessment Exercise

The results of the Board's Self-assessment on Equity and Diversity were shared with the members present (Appendix A).

In general, the self-assessment provoked participants to more deeply assess their work. The emerging, developing and transforming statements for each area enabled members to reflect on their current practice and identified areas of improvement. There was some recognition of missed opportunities in recently completed work, such as hiring processes, strategic planning or policy work where the next window of opportunity would not arise until much later.

Additionally, some members mentioned that despite participating in multiple opportunities to improve their understanding of systemic racism, there remains a disconnect between discussions about equity and inclusion and the day to day work. There was a common desire to learn how to both personally build the skills needed to work in more inclusive ways, as well as a desire to change organizational

“Embarrassed by how little we have done so far”

“These are not everyday considerations at the decision-making level”

“We sometimes grade ourselves higher than where we are. We wouldn't want to look at ourselves and stop doing the work that needs to happen”

policy to embed the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion into systemic organizational practice.

Lastly, members observed a varying degree of objectivity in the self-evaluation. While the majority agreed that CSBA is somewhere between the emerging and developing stages, there were some participants who felt CSBA was at the transforming stage. A number of members commented on the need for some external evaluation at a later date once the organization has had some opportunity to improve on its current policy and practice.

Creating Transformation

In separate breakout groups, we asked Association Presidents and Executive Directors (ED) to describe the steps to get to the transforming stage.

From the ED discussion, participants identified several barriers to change/opportunities for growth. These included:

- Uncertainty about what to change in policy and practice.
- Request for support to identify leading practices from other jurisdictions or organizations.
- Potential challenges balancing the time available at CSBA with provincial demands.
- Need to align the work at CSBA in a way that would enable them to also support similar work at the provincial level was deemed important. Additionally, every province brings some expertise in this area, so there may be ways to leverage relationships to improve the status quo nationally.
- President terms and their varying learning curve in this area. CSBA's resources and leadership in this space was seen as an opportunity to support provincial presidents.
- Desire to support presidents to develop the fluency and skills to discuss systemic racism. Lack of comfort or confidence in this space unintentionally leads to avoidance of the issue altogether. Alternatively, people may look to external experts for advice, rather than turn inwards and do the work needed to speak to an issue.
- Perceived political risk associated with politicians speaking to issues of race. Trustees interested in re-election may avoid speaking to these issues depending on their perceived electoral conditions.
- Need to identify evergreen resources to avoid constantly needing to update outdated materials.
- Distance between the education "system" and what is happening in the classroom. How the overall system is built, who is allowed to participate and how were seen as important parameters to address.
- Desire to embed an equity lens within their work. Rather than having a short, focused, separate conversation about equity, participants identified the need to find ways to think about equity in all aspects of their work. As an example, wearing a button that read "I am

*"A fish in the water
doesn't see the water"*

*"People are shy about
talking about issues
related to Indigenous and
people of colour"*

committed to Equity and Inclusion” could serve as a physical reminder for Board members/Trustees.

From the elected officials discussion, participants identified several barriers to change/opportunities for growth. This included:

- Trustee outreach - CSBA does not have authority to obligate trustee professional development.
- How do you balance the desire to create more equitable and inclusive boards without interfering in the democratic process or being seen as anti-democratic?
- How do you sustain the work? What does continuity and succession look like?
- How can CSBA offer reasonable support - what would it look like? Sharing best practices; shining a light on examples of excellence
- Setting an example as an executive; called on to do a lot, how do we build capacity and draw others in as we go

Participants identified many opportunities for CSBA to take a leadership role in this space. In particular, participants felt that CSBA was the appropriate entity to develop professional development resources for trustees that could be used by provincial associations.

“National coordination of local leadership”

The policy review underway at CSBA, as well as embedding equity within CSBA’s strategic goals and priorities were seen in a positive light. Lastly, the focus on equity and inclusion at this year’s national CSBA Congress, and a continuous focus on this topic at subsequent meetings was supported by participants.

Closing Circle

In conclusion, participants shared the need for work in four key areas:

- External evaluation to hold up the mirror objectively
- Opportunities for sharing best practices and enabling CSBA to serve as a model for others
- Building capacity
- Continuity of practice in the reality of change and political turnover

Next Steps

The CSBA's Acknowledgement on Equity and Diversity commits the CSBA Board to complete a critical examination of its structures and processes. The Board self-assessment was a key exercise in this examination, and Board members identified the following next steps:

- review of CSBA policies from an EDI lens
- identification of leading/best practices in the Board's governance and operational activities
- changes to CSBA policies and structures
- development of EDI professional development resources for trustees
- external evaluation of Board's performance related to EDI
- continue to host national gathering of trustees and showcase EDI work there

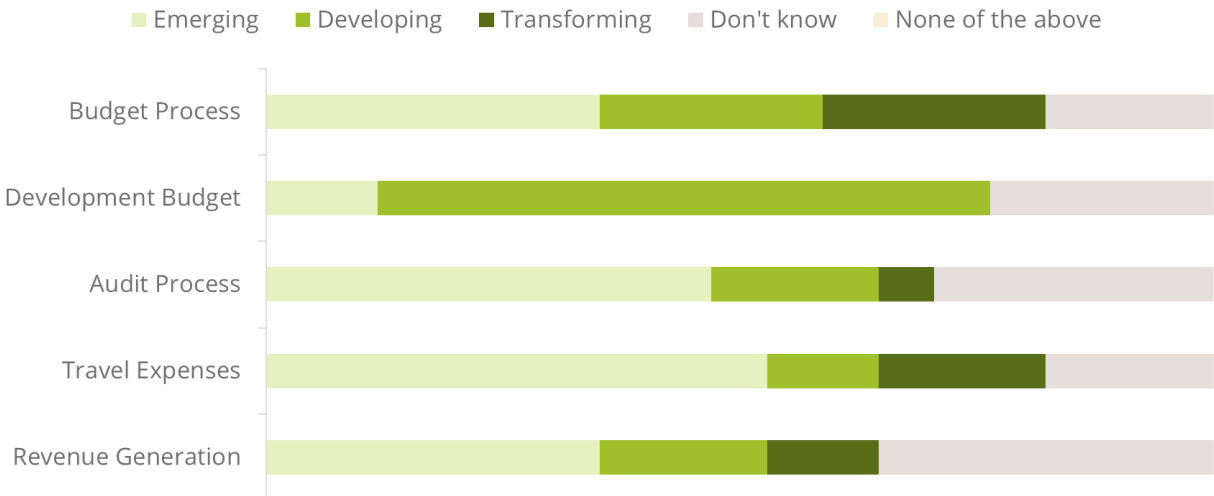
Appendix A

Results from Board Self-Assessment

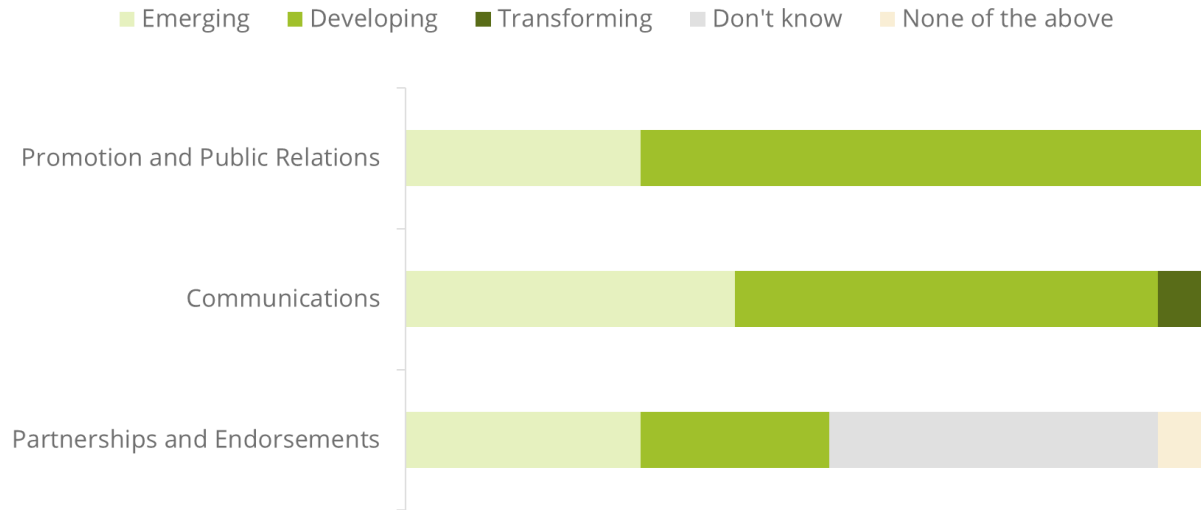
Governance Practices



Finance Practices



Public Relations Practices



Human Resources Practices

