



# Leading Social Change in Schools Cohort

*A Leadership Program for Supporting & Sustaining Equity-Driven Educators in the Faculty of Education*

***Less “just hang in there.” More “let’s change this. Together.”***

The ***Leading Social Change in Schools Cohort*** is an informal educator development program for student-teachers to learn the skills required to make actionable and sustainable social change in their schools and communities.

**Why the Cohort?** Student-teachers working for social change – and especially those from equity-seeking groups – can face systemic barriers both in teacher education and later on when they enter the school system<sup>1,2</sup>. By equipping student-teachers with leadership skill development in **self-advocacy**, **systems thinking**, and **collaborative peer learning**<sup>3</sup>, we can help empower them to not only survive in the teaching profession, but thrive as long-term equity leaders in their schools and communities.

The cohort is a non-academic/non-credit program and there are no fees for students – it is completely free!

**How do I apply?** Fill out the application form [here](#) by **June 13, 2025**. The final cohort will be confirmed by June 30, 2025. The **first meeting is September 9, 2025**.

<sup>1</sup> Alizai, H. (2024). Learning to teach while Muslim: Examining Muslim teacher candidates’ experiences in Canadian teacher education. Queen’s University. Retrieved from <https://qspace.library.queensu.ca/server/api/core/bitstreams/126f83fd-bfe1-4b38-bd7a-ce8f3e1c4712/content>

<sup>2</sup> Marom, L. (2023). “I wasn’t good enough through their eyes”: White dominance and conceptions of the “good teacher” in teacher education in Canada. In *English as an International Language Education* (pp. 111–128). Springer. Retrieved from [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-34702-3\\_6](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-34702-3_6)

<sup>3</sup> Gabhi, M. K. (2024). Dominant or underrepresented: How social position and program context impact teacher candidates’ professional identity formation. Queen’s University. Retrieved from <https://qspace.library.queensu.ca/items/3aab3235-b647-462d-b9c6-473ed308e2b3>

**Who?** ANY current B.Ed. students (in practicum or not) who is interested in creating change in their schools and communities. You must be currently enrolled in the Faculty of Education to apply. We especially encourage applications from students from marginalized equity groups, including (but not limited to) individuals who: are racialized minority groups; Indigenous students; students with lived experience of neurodiversity, mental illness, and disability; 2SLGBTQIA+ students; first-generation students; newcomer, international, and English language learner students; students from low socioeconomic backgrounds; rural students; mature students, parenting students and student-caregivers; and students from religious minorities.

*Note for sign up form: We see equity as it is described in the [Alberta Human Rights Act](#), which is not an exhaustive list. We all inhabit positions of privilege and oppression in multiple ways. **If you do not see yourself represented by one of these categories, we still want you to apply!***

*You will be asked to self-identify in the application form, but will never be required to self-identify publicly or 'prove' any aspects of your identity within the program. We trust your lived experience and we encourage you to be in touch with the Faculty Advisor, Brent Saccucci, to discuss further if needed.*

**What?** The pilot program will include **8 mandatory workshops** (1 per month) from Sept 2025-April 2026:

**High level outcomes include:** developing leadership and advocacy skills, building community and 'critical friendship', and learning more about yourself and your peers through praxis-based learning (reflection and action to create change).

The workshops will include the following components:

↳ **Discussions and activities lead by the faculty advisor** (Brent Saccucci) on a leadership development skills such as: self-advocacy while precariously employed (in contract positions); responding to minority stress and imposterism; managing intra and inter-personal conflicts between personal values and institutional policies; how to talk about (your) identity in class; building resilience in emotionally taxing environments; and utilizing ethical and legal frameworks when dealing with discrimination from staff, students, or parents.

↳ **Cohort-led activities** or discussion facilitated by the cohort members themselves to help develop teacher-leadership skills and peer learning. Cohort members will have the opportunity to lead a discussion/activity on a topic of their choice relating to their experience as an educator living with multiple intersections of identity. For example, someone may lead a discussion on how to address anti-Black racism with white students in an elementary class; or how to navigate disclosing (and expressing) your gender identity in a religious school environment.

↳ **Field mentors** including in-service teachers and administrators in Southern Alberta schools that can share their own stories and lived experiences while providing critical friendship and mentorship to cohort members. *Field mentors will be at every Milestone Meeting.*

↳ **Informal wellness and social connection activities** for cohort members to come together and engage in discussion, mentorship, and relationship building activities that promote wellbeing, strengthen community, and combat burnout.

**When?** Monthly workshops from September 2025 to April 2026 from **5-7pm (new time)**. There will be three extra social connection events to celebrate program milestones (one at the end of Term 1 in mid-December; one at the end of Term 2 in mid-April). *The exact times and dates for these will be discussed with the finalized cohort group, but are tentatively planned here:*

**FALL TERM 2025:**

Tuesday Sept 9, 2025 (**Milestone:** Meeting your Cohort)

*Tuesday Sept 16, 2025 (September Monthly Session)*

*Tuesday October 7, 2025 (October Monthly Session)*

*Tuesday November 4, 2025 (November Monthly Session)*

*Tuesday December 2, 2025 (December Monthly Session)*

Tuesday December 9, 2025 (**Milestone:** End of Term 1 Session)

**WINTER TERM 2026:**

*Tuesday January 13, 2026 (January Monthly Session)*

*Tuesday February 3, 2026 (February Monthly Session)*

*Tuesday March 3, 2026 (March Monthly Session)*

*Tuesday April 7, 2026 (April Monthly Session)*

Tuesday April 14, 2026 (**Milestone:** Cohort Final Session)

**Where?** The University of Lethbridge campus in Turcotte Hall (TH 341). This is an **in-person** program and is of no cost to students.

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***How does The Cohort align with our alignment with the Teacher Quality Standard (TQS) and the commitments from both the Faculty of Education and the University of Lethbridge?***

**University of Lethbridge:**

- In the [Public Report from the President's Advisory Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and the President's Executive](#) (2019) recommendations included
  - Create a culture of inclusivity by making efforts to address diversity, equity and inclusion visible across both campuses; identify them as priorities in institutional plans, reports and documents (7).
  - Ensure initiatives related to gender, sexuality, sexual violence, indigenization, internationalization, anti-racism, etc. that are undertaken by various groups are integrated and coordinated across both campuses for greater effect and efficiency (7).
  - Provide education, resources, and encouragement to faculties to diversify their curriculum (7).
- Commitments to tackle racism and discrimination in post-secondary education demonstrated by the University's signing of the [Scarborough Charter](#) as well as the [endorsement of the Scarborough Charter from the Association of Canadian Deans of Education \(ACDE\)](#)
- Commitment to uphold [Universities Canada Inclusive Excellence Principles](#) (specifically Principle 5).
- As well as the [Faculty of Education's commitments](#) "We model and facilitate belonging and wellbeing in our relationships with and among each other" and "We strive to thoughtfully respond to complex educational and societal challenges as they emerge."

**TQS Connections:**

- 1 (c) providing culturally appropriate and meaningful opportunities for students and for parents/guardians, as partners in education, to support student learning;
- 1 (f) honouring cultural diversity and promoting intercultural understanding
- 2 (a) collaborating with other teachers to build personal and collective professional capacities and expertise;
- 2 (e) enhancing understanding of First Nations, Métis and Inuit worldviews, cultural beliefs, languages and values; and
- 4 (a) fostering in the school community equality and respect with regard to rights as provided for in the Alberta Human Rights Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms;

4 (g) incorporating students' personal and cultural strengths into teaching and learning; and

5 (a) understanding the historical, social, economic, and political implications of:

- treaties and agreements with First Nations;
- legislation and agreements negotiated with

Métis; and

- residential schools and their legacy;

5 (b) supporting student achievement by engaging in collaborative, whole school approaches to capacity building in First Nations, Métis and Inuit education;

5 (d) supporting the learning experiences of all students by using resources that accurately reflect and demonstrate the strength and diversity of First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

Exemplar programs in Canada:

1. [Teacher Candidates of Colour](#) - Faculty of Education, Queen's University
2. [Black Future Educators Pathway](#) - OISE/University of Toronto
3. [Equity B.Ed. Cohort](#) - Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia

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For more information or if you have more questions, contact:

**Brent Saccucci, Instructor III - Social Contexts of Education**

**Faculty Advisor, Leading Social Change in Schools Cohort**

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