

POLICY

SECTION:	HUMAN RESOURCES - GENERAL	POLICY:	E-11
TOPIC:	EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION	PAGE:	Page 1 of 4
		DATE:	April 2012
REVIEW DATE:	April 2017	REVISED:	

In the District School Board of Niagara, we believe that all students can learn and our mission is to enable every student to learn effectively, to reduce achievement gaps and to improve learning outcomes for all, regardless of race, class, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and other historical forms of marginalization¹.

The Board upholds the principles of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Constitution Act, 1982* and confirmed in the *Ontario Human Rights Code* (the "Code"). The Board and its staff are also committed to the elimination of all types of discrimination as outlined in *Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* (the "Strategy") and the Ontario Ministry of Education (the "Ministry") Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119. The Board recognizes that equity of opportunity and equity of access to the full range of programs, the delivery of services, and resources are critical to the achievement of successful educational and social outcomes for those served by the school system as well as those who serve the system.

The Board is therefore committed to an equitable education system that upholds and reflects the principles of fair and inclusive education and employment which should permeate all policies, programs, practices, and operations.

AREAS OF POLICY FOCUS:

Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation, Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 (2009) "*Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools*" identify eight areas of focus for implementing equity and inclusive education.

Each area of focus will be introduced and anchored by a preamble and a policy statement which will serve to guide the actions of the Board and its schools, in honouring its commitments to equity and inclusive education policy development, implementation, monitoring and reporting.

1. BOARD POLICIES, PROGRAMS, GUIDELINES AND PRACTICES**Preamble:**

The Board will ensure that its policy review cycle will result in the alignment and integration of the requirements of the *Code*, Policy/Program No. 119 and the Strategy into all Board policies, programs, procedures, and practices. Respect for the diverse perspectives of the entire school and community will be reflected in all areas of the teaching, learning and administrative culture. Every effort will be made to identify and remove discriminatory biases and systemic barriers that may limit access to, and opportunity for, effective student engagement and achievement. The goal is to ensure that school and work environments are inclusive and welcoming and reflect the makeup of their diverse communities.

It is the Policy of the Board to:

Serve staff, students, and families in diverse communities by incorporating the principles of equity and inclusive education into all aspects of its operations, structures, policies, programs, procedures, guidelines, and practices, consistent with the principles of the *Code*.

¹ The Ontario Human Rights Code identifies the following prohibited discrimination grounds: age, ancestry, citizenship, colour, creed, disability, ethnic origin, marital and family status, place of origin, race, record of offences, sex, and/or sexual orientation.

POLICY

SECTION:	HUMAN RESOURCES - GENERAL	POLICY:	E-11
TOPIC:	EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION	PAGE:	Page 2 of 4
		DATE:	April 2012
REVIEW DATE:	April 2017	REVISED:	

2. SHARED AND COMMITTED LEADERSHIP**Preamble:**

The Board subscribes to an informed leadership philosophy that advocates, inspires, empowers, and supports all stakeholders to join together to implement institutional practices and behaviours that cultivate equity and inclusive education.

The Board is committed to providing informed shared leadership and mentoring to improve student achievement and to close achievement gaps for students by identifying, addressing, and removing all barriers and forms of discrimination, consistent with the principles of the *Code*.

The Board recognizes the critical connection between student leadership and improved student achievement and will strive to include the student, parent/guardian, and community voice in the implementation of equity and inclusive education.

In accordance with the Ministry's Ontario Leadership Strategy, effective Board and school leaders will encourage and promote a collaborative approach to all dimensions of equity and inclusive education, which ensures the participation of students, parents/guardians, unions, colleges and universities, service organizations and other diverse community partners.

It is the Policy of the Board to:

Establish and maintain collaborative shared leadership relationships with diverse communities so that the perspectives and experiences of all students are recognized to help meet their needs.

3. SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS**Preamble:**

The Board recognizes that the effective review, development, implementation and monitoring of equity and inclusive education policies and practices requires the involvement of all members of the entire school community.

The Board values the assets that all stakeholders can bring to enable each and every student to learn effectively and enhance educational opportunities for all.

The Board is committed to the maintenance, development, and expansion of partnerships with parents/guardians and diverse communities and their respective community support services that sustain system and school improvement.

The Board will undertake to identify, examine, and remove barriers that exist which may inhibit full participatory school-community relations.

It is the Policy of the Board to:

Establish, maintain, and strengthen collaborative relationships with diverse communities so that the perspectives and experiences of all students, families, and employees are recognized and addressed.

POLICY

SECTION:	HUMAN RESOURCES - GENERAL	POLICY:	E-11
TOPIC:	EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION	PAGE:	Page 3 of 4
		DATE:	April 2012
REVIEW DATE:	April 2017	REVISED:	

4. INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT PRACTICES**Preamble:**

When we consider inclusive curriculum and assessment practices, we need to consider both the “how” and the “what”. What we bring to students in terms of content is as important as the way it is delivered. We must consider both what is included and what is excluded, as it is known that our students learn both the explicit and underlying curricula. Both in its content and methodology, inclusive curriculum seeks to recognize and affirm the life experiences of all students, regardless of race and ethnicity, gender, place of origin, religion, cultural and linguistic background, social and economic status, sexual orientation, age, and ability/disability.

Providing opportunities for assessment, evaluation, and reporting practices and procedures must be fair, transparent, and equitable for all students as essential components of an inclusive curriculum. Multiple opportunities for assessment allows for student learning and accuracy of instruction and varied opportunities for students to demonstrate learning. Effective evaluation includes researched best practices that truly reflect the current and consistent level of achievement of the student. A student’s understanding of assessment and evaluation practices increases the depth of understanding and learning.

It is the Policy of the Board to:

Implement an inclusive curriculum based on Ministry of Education curriculum guidelines and to review resources, instruction, and assessment and evaluation practices in order to identify and address discriminatory biases so that each student may maximize her or his learning potential.

5. RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION**Preamble:**

The Board recognizes and values the religious diversity within its community and is committed to providing a safe, respectful and equitable environment for all, free from all forms of discriminatory or harassing behaviour, including those based on religion.

Freedom of religion is an individual right and a collective responsibility. The Board and the community it serves must work together to foster an inclusive learning environment that promotes acceptance and protects religious freedom for all individuals. While the Board and its staff will take all reasonable steps to ensure freedom of religion and religious practices, it is expected that students, their families, and DSBN staff will help the Board to understand their religious needs and will work with the Board to determine appropriate and reasonable accommodations.

It is the Policy of the Board to:

Acknowledge each individual’s right to follow or not to follow religious beliefs and practices, free from discriminatory or harassing behavior. The Board is committed to taking all reasonable steps to provide religious accommodations to staff and students.

POLICY

SECTION:	HUMAN RESOURCES - GENERAL	POLICY:	E-11
TOPIC:	EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION	PAGE:	Page 4 of 4
		DATE:	April 2012
REVIEW DATE:	April 2017	REVISED:	

6. SCHOOL CLIMATE AND THE PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT**Preamble:**

School climate must welcome all stakeholders and encourage active participation of parents/guardians, students and staff in ensuring that the principles of the *Code* and the Equity Strategy are applied in our schools. The Equity strategy requires Boards to use a range of tools, including an equity lens, reflection tools and *Code* principles to examine their policies, procedures and practices to address what may be discriminatory practices. Respectful school climate includes the active participation of underrepresented peoples as valued participants. Board mechanisms work towards the eradication of discrimination and harassment with the purpose of enhancing public confidence in the Board's response to claims of discrimination of any kind.

It is the Policy of the Board to:

Commit to the principle that every person within the school community is entitled to a respectful, positive school climate and learning environment, free from all forms of discrimination and harassment.

7. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**Preamble:**

Professional learning increases the knowledge and skills that staff bring to the craft and science of education, and, thus, engages students in learning. Continuous professional learning and collaboration is the groundwork for positive growth, and achieving ambitious outcomes in our schools.

It is the Policy of the Board to:

Provide administrators, staff, students and other members of the school community with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviour needed to identify and eliminate discriminatory biases and systemic barriers under the *Code*.

8. ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY**Preamble:**

As a publicly funded education system, the Board acknowledges and assumes the responsibility for its policies, actions, and decisions. In the pursuit of greater transparency and accountability, the Board, in respectful collaboration and communication with the whole school community, will report on its goals and progress in the areas of policy review, school improvement planning and the implementation of *The Strategy*.

It is the Policy of the Board to:

Assess and monitor Board progress in implementing *The Strategy*; to embed the principles into all Board policies, programs, guidelines and practices; and to communicate these results to the community.

References

Policy E-9: Human Rights

Administrative Procedure 5-10: Human Rights: Discrimination/Harassment Complaint Process

Administrative Procedure 6-5: Multicultural Education

Administrative Procedure 6-6: Equity and Inclusive Education Compliance Guidelines, Religious Accommodation Guidelines