



District School Board of Niagara  
Policy  
School Operations

# G-03

## Equity and Inclusive Education

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 **Date** Nov 2021  
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The District School Board of Niagara (DSBN) believes that diversity is a source of strength and innovation, and our schools embrace and appreciate the values, identities and lived experiences of students. DSBN is committed to creating a learning and working environment that is free of discrimination and harrasment regardless of race, class, gender, gender identity and gender expression, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and other forms of discrimination.<sup>1</sup>

Guided by the principles enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Constitution Act (1982), the Ontario Human Rights Code, and as outlined in PPM No. 119 (2013), the DSBN and its staff are committed to the elimination of discrimination as outlined in the Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (the Strategy).

Creating a culture of transformative and impactful change requires a collective commitment to disrupting the status quo, engaging in courageous conversations on equity and designing new pathways to achieving equitable outcomes for all students. The DSBN stands behind an inclusive design that uses an asset-based lens of students, and is anchored in anti-oppression, anti-racism and human rights. This inclusive framework involves:

- Continuing to grow in our knowledge about the systems and structures that create and sustain racism, oppression and exclusion,
- Collectively taking action to revisit and re-evaluate our practices through an anti-oppression, anti-bias and anti-racism lens,
- Creating the conditions to ensure every child, regardless of their social identity, is challenged to reach high standards,
- Embedding culturally and historically relevant content so students see themselves reflected in the curriculum.

The following definitions are included for the purposes of this policy.

**Anti-racism:** A process of actively identifying and opposing racism. The goal of anti-racism is to disrupt racism and actively change the policies, behaviours, and beliefs that perpetuate racist ideas and actions at the individual, institutional, and structural levels.

**Equity:** A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.

**Inclusive Education:** Education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected.

## **AREAS OF FOCUS**

The following areas of focus will serve to guide the actions of the DSBN and its schools, in providing a safe, inclusive environment free from inequity, discrimination and harassment.

## **POLICIES, PROGRAMS, GUIDELINES AND PRACTICES**

Serve staff, students, and families by incorporating the principles of equity and inclusive education into all aspects of the DSBN's operations, structures, policies, programs, procedures, guidelines, and practices, consistent with the principles of the Ontario Human Rights Code.

## **SHARED AND COMMITTED LEADERSHIP**

Establishing a truly equitable and inclusive education system requires commitment from all levels. All partners in education, within the Ministry, DSBN and its schools, have a critical role to play in leading the identification and removal of bias, discrimination, and barriers to an inclusive education system.

## **SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS**

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

## **INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT PRACTICES**

Implement a culturally and historically responsive curriculum so each student may see their identity reflected. Review resources, instruction, and assessment and evaluation practices in order to identify and address discriminatory biases to maximize each student's learning potential.

## **CREED ACCOMMODATION**

Acknowledge each individual's right to follow or not to follow religious or creed-based beliefs and practices, which shall be free from discriminatory or harassing behaviour. The DSBN and its schools are committed to adhering to the DSBN's creed accommodation guidelines.

## **GENDER IDENTITY AND GENDER EXPRESSION**

Acknowledge each individual's right to bring their full selves to an inclusive school and work environment, which shall be free from discriminatory or harassing behaviour. The DSBN and its schools are committed to adhering to the DSBN's gender identity and gender expression guidelines.

## **ABILITIES**

Implement supports, services and strategies that inspire and engage students, which shall be free from discriminatory or harassing behaviour. Services and strategies are responsive to the strengths and needs of each student and ensure a caring learning environment where every student can achieve.

## **SCHOOL CLIMATE AND THE PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT**

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. The DSBN will monitor through school climate surveys, as outlined in Policy/Program Memorandum No.144, "Bullying Prevention and Intervention", to help identify inappropriate behaviours, barriers, or issues that should be addressed.

## **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

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.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY**

Assess and monitor DSBN progress in implementing the Strategy; to embed the principles into all DSBN policies, programs, guidelines, and practices; and to communicate these results to the community through established DSBN committees, the DSBN equity website and the DSBN equity action plan.

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

## **REFERENCES**

Policy D-09: Framework for the Provision of Special Education Services (/D-09)

Policy G-02: Safe Schools (/G-02)

Policy G-08: DSBN Code of Conduct for Schools (/G-08)

Policy G-28: Student Discipline (/G-28)

Policy G-29: Safe and Accepting Schools: Bullying Prevention and Intervention (/G-29)

Policy G-39: Human Rights Discrimination and Harassment or Occupational Health and Safety Workplace Harassment (/G-39)

DSBN Recognizing & Respecting Creed Diversity: Family Guidelines 2021

([https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uY\\_FoqaXxG248Sc280oTxm-TA0fud51f/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uY_FoqaXxG248Sc280oTxm-TA0fud51f/view?usp=sharing))

Learning for All – A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2013

(<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/learningforall2013.pdf>)

Ontario Human Rights Code (<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/ontario-human-rights-code>)

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, The Constitution Act (1982)

(<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/how-rights-protected/guide-canadian-charter-rights-freedoms.html>)

Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (2014)

(<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/inclusiveguide.pdf>)

Ontario Human Rights Commission, Policy on Preventing Discrimination based on Creed (2015) (<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-discrimination-based-creed>)

Education in Ontario: Policy and Program Direction

(<https://www.ontario.ca/document/education-ontario-policy-and-program-direction>)

Ontario's Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum No. 108

Ontario's Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119

Ontario's Ministry of Education Policy/program Memorandum No. 144