

NUMBER:	<i>to be determined</i>
TOPIC:	Equity and Inclusive Education Policy
EFFECTIVE:	September 2010
CROSS-REFERENCE:	Ontario Human Rights Code Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools Ministry of Education Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy HDSB Harassment and Discrimination Policy
Review/REVISION DATE:	September 2011
RESPONSIBILITY:	Superintendent of Education

INTENDED PURPOSE:

The Halton District School Board believes that all students can learn and we strive to enable each and 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 that permeates all policies, programs, practices, and operations.

The Board Will:**1. Board Policies, Programs, Guidelines And Practices**

- Commit 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 *Ontario Human Rights Code*;

¹ The Ontario Human Rights Code identifies the following prohibited discrimination grounds: race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed (religion), sex (includes gender identity and pregnancy), sexual orientation, age, record of offences, marital status, family status, and/or disability (includes perceived disability). (From *Human Rights at Work, Third Edition*, p 14)

2. Shared And Committed Leadership

- Commit to establishing and maintaining collaborative leadership relationships among staff and our diverse communities so that the perspectives and experiences of all students are recognized to help meet their needs;

3. School-Community Relationships

- Commit to establishing and maintaining collaborative relationships with diverse communities so that the perspectives and experiences of all students, families, and employees are recognized and addressed;

4. Inclusive Curriculum And Assessment Practices

- Direct staff to implement an inclusive curriculum 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

- Commit to acknowledge each individual's right to follow or not to follow religious beliefs and practices free from discriminatory or harassing behaviour;
- Commit to taking all reasonable steps to provide religious accommodations to staff and students. HDSB will not distribute faith-based literature or act as agents for distributing faith-based literature to students, families, and staff;

6. 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, learning and work environment, free from all forms of discrimination and harassment;

7. Professional Learning

- Commit to providing 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 *Ontario Human Rights Code*;

8. Accountability And Transparency

- Assess and monitor Board progress in implementing *Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy*; to embed the principles into all Board policies, programs, guidelines and practices; and to communicate these results to the community.

Appendix A

Equity and Inclusive Education Policy Implementation Goals

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Equity and Inclusive Education Implementation Plan

The implementation plan goal areas follow the eight areas outlined in the Equity and Inclusive Education Policy. The steering committee and staff will operationalize the goal areas.

EXAMPLE

Board Policies, Programs, Guidelines and Practices

ITEM	SMART GOAL	ACTIONS	INDICATORS/ MEASURES	TIMELINES	RESPONSIBILITY
1.4 Ensure all future policies, guidelines and practices are drafted and implemented in accordance with the Board's equity and inclusive education policy.					

Goal Areas:

1. Board Policies, Programs, Guidelines and Practices

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*.

Action Items:

The Board will:

- 1.1 Establish the foundational framework that will inform their review and/or development and implementation of a comprehensive equity and inclusive education policy that recognizes and addresses biases related to race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, family status, and religious and linguistic differences as well as socio-economic factors.
- 1.2 Review existing equity and inclusive education policies and/or extend or develop such policies to fulfil the requirements of existing regulations, the *Strategy*, Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119, and the *Code*.

- 1.3 Ensure that principles of equity and inclusive education permeate and are explicitly stated in all Board policies, programs, guidelines, operations, practices, and Board improvement plans.
- 1.4 Ensure all future policies, guidelines and practices are drafted and implemented in accordance with the Board's equity and inclusive education policy.
- 1.5 Collect information needed to monitor the effects of the implementation of the Equity and Inclusion Education policy by the Board.
- 1.6 Ensure persons with disabilities are accommodated appropriately and in a manner consistent with the *Code*.
- 1.7 Provide training for school leaders and hiring managers to facilitate equitable recruitment and hiring practices to reflect Ontario's diverse society
- 1.8 Provide opportunities for the diverse school community, including students, staff, parents, trustees and community members, to provide active input into Board policies and improvement plans on an ongoing basis.
- 1.9 Investigate in a thorough and timely manner any claims of discrimination and/or racism and take appropriate action, consistent with the principles of the *Code*.

Our Schools will:

- 1.10 Review existing school policies, for example, codes of conduct and discipline procedures, to determine that they include the principles of equity and inclusive education.
- 1.11 Extend, develop, and implement strategies to actively engage students, parents, families, and the wider community in the review, development, and implementation of initiatives to support and promote equity and inclusive education.
- 1.12 Implement Board equity and inclusive education policies, programs and school improvement plans that are consistent with the *Code and* reflect the needs of their diverse students and school communities.

2. Shared and Committed leadership

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

Action Items:

The Board will:

Develop a system plan to build and sustain staff capacity in the areas of equity and inclusive education in curriculum and instruction, human resources and governance.

- 2.1 Identify and appoint a contact person to liaise with the Ministry and other Boards to share challenges, promising practices and resources.
- 2.2 Provide ongoing education and training for students, administrators, teachers (including guidance counsellors), support staff and trustees in implementing equity and inclusive education and leadership initiatives.
- 2.3 Establish selection criteria for leadership positions that prioritize demonstrated commitment, knowledge and skills related to equity and inclusive education implementation and inclusive leadership, and cognizant of *Code* compliance.

- 2.4 Provide ongoing training for all staff that reflects comprehensive attention to the principles of human rights and their fundamental role in an equitable and inclusive environment.
- 2.5 Strive to include members of communities that are underserved and /or marginalized are included in the shared leadership.

Our Schools will:

- 2.6 Establish a collaborative culture where the collective capabilities and voices of all stakeholders are used to develop and implement equity and inclusive education goals.
- 2.7 Promote equity minded student leadership related to issues of social justice.

Demonstrate leadership in setting the tone for the positive and proactive implementation of the Equity Strategy within the school.

3. School-Community Relationships

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

Action Items:

The Board will:

- 3.1 Review and/or initiate tools, for example, school climate surveys, to determine stakeholders' views on school environments and act upon relevant next steps.
- 3.2 Review existing committees, for example, Parent Engagement, to assess the levels of representation of the diversity of the Board and the wider community.
- 3.3 Review and /or deepen existing community partnerships to ensure that they reflect the principles of equity and inclusive education.
- 3.4 Expand community outreach efforts to foster new partnerships that engage a cross-section of diverse students, parents, staff, community members and various community organizations, including business groups to foster and support an inclusive environment.
- 3.5 Establish processes to identify and address systemic barriers that limit or prevent all sectors of the school community from opportunities for Board representation and involvement in Board activity.

Our Schools will:

- 3.6 Implement strategies to review existing community partnerships to ensure that they reflect the diversity of the broader community.
- 3.7 Invite and support representation of diverse groups on school committees, including school improvement planning.
- 3.8 Engage stakeholders in community forums to listen and address concerns and suggestion

4. Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment Practices

Curriculum is defined as the total learning environment, including physical environment, learning materials, pedagogical practices, assessment instruments, and co-curricular and extra curricular activities. Inclusive curriculum is a philosophical approach to learning and teaching, which recognizes and values the rich diversity of our school population (Nora Allingham)

Implement an inclusive curriculum 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.

Action Items:

The Board will:

- 4.1 Review student assessment and evaluation policies and practices to identify and address bias that may exist in the way students' work is assessed and evaluated in order to reduce the achievement gap. The principles of such a review will be consistent with the *Code*.
- 4.2 Support the schools' review of classroom strategies that promote school-wide equity and inclusive education policies and practices specifically addressing areas of discrimination under the *Code* (e.g., race, gender, disability, creed/religion, sexual orientation).

Our Schools will:

- 4.3 Review student assessment and evaluation policies and practices to identify and address systemic bias that may exist in the way students' work is assessed and evaluated; the principles of such a review will be consistent with the *Code*.
 - 4.3.1 Provide for assessment and evaluation to support growth and learning, with the belief that each and every student can achieve and be successful given the appropriate time and support.
 - 4.3.2 Provide education and training based on the belief that all students can learn and that it is reflected in the expectations of students' assessment and evaluation practices, counselling about available program options, and other counselling practices.
 - 4.3.3 Use a variety of assessment strategies and instruments to inform short- and long-term planning to reduce gaps in student achievement and improve student learning.
 - 4.3.4 Support the schools' review of classroom strategies that promote school-wide equity and inclusive education policies and practices;
 - 4.3.5 Provide multiple opportunities for assessment (self, peer, teacher, student led conferencing and /or parent/student and teacher interviews).
 - 4.3.6 Instruction should be adjusted based on the results of formative assessment. Feedback to students should be specific, timely and promote further learning.
 - 4.3.7 Provide a learning environment that recognizes and supports a variety of learning styles found in students. Provide for consistent monitoring of the growth of students who are on Individual Education Plans and/or are English Language Learners to meet the specific needs of students are addressed through the accuracy of programming based on best practices in assessment; all needed accommodations and modifications must be in place to assist the student in accessing the curriculum.
 - 4.3.8 Provide an education program for students who have English language learning needs that aligns with their specific needs and that provides equity of access to the curriculum.

- 4.3.9 Provide access and use of assistive technologies for students who require accommodations to support achievement and success.
- 4.3.10 Engage students as active participants in their learning (e.g. students seeing and hearing themselves in the curriculum; gender specific teaching practices; culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy; research based practices in assessment and evaluation).
- 4.3.11 Review and reflect upon classroom practices and revise them as needed to help ensure that they are aligned with school-wide equity and inclusive education policies.
- 4.3.12 Make certain that resources and instructional strategies respectful to the prohibited grounds of discrimination; show people of different races, genders, and ages in non-stereotypical settings, occupations, and activities; explore the roles and contributions of all peoples in Canada, and the factors that shaped these roles; encourage open discussion of the prohibited grounds of discrimination under the *Code* (e.g., race, gender, disability, faith, sexual orientation) in society, the community, and the school.

5. Religious Accommodation

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

Action Items:

The Board will:

- 5.1 Consult with members of the multiple faith communities that represent the Board in the development and implementation of this policy.
- 5.2 Inform students and their parents/guardians and staff of their right to request accommodation for religious beliefs and practices.
- 5.3 Prepare a religious accommodation guideline in keeping with the *Code*, which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of creed, and other *Code* protected grounds, and provides a duty to accommodate.
- 5.4 Provide religious accommodation for students and staff consistent with the *Code*.

Our Schools will:

- 5.5 Revise /Implement their religious accommodation practices to align with the Board's religious accommodation guideline.

6. School Climate and the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment

Students who describe their classroom disciplinary climate as positive are one-and-a-half times more likely to report high levels of interest, motivation, and enjoyment in learning CEA Report "What did you Learn in School Today" 2009)

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.

Action Items:

The Board will:

- 6.1 Implement strategies to identify and remove discriminatory barriers that limit engagement by students, parents, and the community, so that diverse groups and the broader community have Board-level representation and access to Board initiatives;
- 6.2 Put procedures in place that will enable students and staff to report incidents of discrimination and harassment safely and that will also enable Boards to respond in a timely and effective manner as required in P/PM 145- 2009 Progressive discipline and promoting positive student behaviour
- 6.3 Promote positive behaviour through initiating or strengthening proactive programs to reduce suspensions and expulsions and as required by P/PM 144 – 2009- Bullying Prevention and Intervention.
- 6.4 Create a culture of high expectations in which excellence is continually strived for and respect permeates the environment.

Our Schools will:

- 6.5 Revise codes of conduct are to identify and address any evidence of racism or discrimination.
- 6.6 Use Progressive Discipline practice which may include peer mediation and restorative justice.
- 6.7 Welcome, respect and validate the contributions of all students, parents, and other members of the school community.
- 6.8 Ensure that every student is supported as identified in Student Success strategies, *Learning for All, Reach Every Student*, including the *Code*, and is inspired to succeed in a culture of high expectations for learning.
- 6.9 Ensure that school codes of conduct are developed with the active consultation and involvement of students, staff, parents, and a representative cross-section of community members to address the needs of diverse communities.
- 6.10 Assure the school community that Board procedure will enable students and staff to report incidents of harassment and discrimination safely and to have confidence that they will receive a timely and appropriate response in accordance with the requirements of the *Education Act*.

7. 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*.

Action Items:

The Board will:

- 7.1 Support the schools' review of classroom strategies that promote school-wide equity and inclusive education policies and practices.
- 7.2 Allocate resources to provide ongoing opportunities for students, administrators, teachers, support staff, and trustees to participate in equity and inclusive education training and leadership initiatives:
- 7.3 Provide antiracism and antidiscrimination training to students, administrators, teachers, support staff, and trustees.
- 7.3.1 Ensure that the principles of equity and inclusive education are modelled and incorporated in professional learning programs.

Our Schools will:

- 7.4 Review classroom strategies and revise them as needed to help ensure that they are aligned with and reflect school-wide equity and inclusive education policies.
- 7.5 Promote collaboration among staff to select and implement best practices in equity and inclusive education.
- 7.6 Build staff capacity through ongoing professional learning that is based on needs determined through results-oriented and evidence-based research.
- 7.7 Encourage and support students in their efforts to promote social justice, equity, antiracism, and antidiscrimination in schools and classrooms.
- 7.8 Undertake initiatives which promote a welcoming and respectful school environment and provide timely and specific feedback that will further school-wide equitable practices.

8. Accountability and Transparency

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.

Action Items:

The Board will:

- 8.1 Embed the principles of equity and inclusive education into all Board policies, programs, guidelines, and practices.
- 8.2 Actively communicate the equity and inclusive education policy to students, teachers, parents, staff, school councils, community partners, and volunteers and post it on the Board's website. Seek and use feedback to improve the Equity and Inclusive Education policy, in the spirit of continuous improvement.

- 8.3 Engage Board and school teams in school improvement planning with particular emphasis on identifying and removing barriers to student achievement.
- 8.4 Establish processes to monitor progress and assess effectiveness of policies, programs, and procedures.
- 8.5 Report on the progress of implementation of The Strategy and its impact on student achievement using specific criteria to the Ministry of Education and the local community.
- 8.6 Ensure the transparency of the Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process, inform, and support parents through this process.

Our Schools will:

- 8.7 Report student achievement data annually to the Board and intervene at all levels to ensure the achievement and success of all students.
- 8.8 Develop and communicate evidence based school improvement plans that are aligned with *The Equity and inclusive Education Strategy*.
- 8.9 Review and establish self-reflection and self-assessment tools to determine the effectiveness of the school's equity and inclusive education plans and procedures.

Schedule A - OHRC Policies and Guides

The Ontario *Human Rights Code* (the "*Code*") is for everyone. It is a provincial law that gives everybody equal rights and opportunities without discrimination in specific areas such as jobs, housing and services. The *Code's* goal is to prevent discrimination and harassment. OHRC policies and guidelines set standards for how individuals, employers, housing providers, service providers and policy makers should act to comply with the *Code*. They are important because they represent the OHRC's interpretation of the *Code* (at the time of publication).

Available on the Internet: www.ohrc.on.ca

Available in other accessible formats on request

- Guide to your rights and responsibilities under the *Human Rights Code* (2009)
- Policy on discrimination because of pregnancy and breastfeeding (2009)
- Policy on human rights and rental housing (2009)
- Human rights at work – Third edition (2008)
- Guidelines on developing human rights policies and procedures (2008)
- Policy on mental health discrimination and police record checks draft (2008)
- Policy on discrimination against older people because of age (2007, 2002)
- Policy and guidelines on discrimination because of family status (2006)
- Policy on discrimination and harassment because of sexual orientation (2006, 2001)
- Guide to releases with respect to human rights complaints (2006)
- Policy and guidelines on racism and racial discrimination (2005)
- Guidelines on accessible education (2004)
- Guidelines for collecting data on enumerated grounds under the *Code* (2003)
- Policy and guidelines on disability and the duty to accommodate (2001)
- Policy on discrimination and harassment because of gender identity (2000)
- Policy on drug and alcohol testing (2000)
- Policy on female genital mutilation (FGM) (1997)
- Policy on scholarships and awards (1997)
- Guidelines on special programs (1997)
- Policy on creed and the accommodation of religious observances (1996)
- Policy on sexual harassment and inappropriate gender-related comments and conduct (1996)
- Policy on HIV/AIDS-related discrimination (1996)
- Policy on requiring a driver's license as a condition of employment (1996)
- Policy on height and weight requirements (1996)
- Policy on employment-related medical information (1996)