

BOARD POLICY	
Adopted	January 2013
Revised	June 2022
Review Date	June 2026

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## EQUITY & INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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### Intended Purpose

The Halton District School Board (“HDSB”) believes that all students can learn. HDSB strives 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 or other historical form of marginalization.

HDSB upholds the principles of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*<sup>1</sup> and Ontario’s *Human Rights Code*,<sup>2</sup> and is committed to pursuing the elimination of direct and adverse impact discrimination on Code-related grounds from its schools and its education system.

The Board is also committed to implementing the following Ministry of Education documents designed to support equity and inclusion in schools:

- Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy 2009;<sup>3</sup>
- Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation, 2014;<sup>4</sup>
- Policy and Program Memorandum No. 119;<sup>5</sup>
- Policy and Program Memorandum No. 128: “The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct”<sup>6</sup>

The Halton District School Board recognizes that equity of opportunity and equity of access to the full range of Board programs, services, and resources are critical to the achievement of successful educational and social outcomes for students.

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

The HDSB shall regularly review its guiding documents to ensure that the principles of equitable and inclusive education, and an anti-racism, anti-oppression perspective, are reflected in its policies, programs, and guidelines, including, but not limited to:

- school improvement plans for student achievement;
- board improvement plans for student achievement; and
- the board’s multi-year plan.

The HDSB will also ensure that a focus on equity and inclusion is integral to every part of its operations, structures, and working and learning environments.

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<sup>1</sup> The Constitution Act, 1982, Schedule B to the Canada Act 1982 (UK), 1982, c 11

<sup>2</sup> RSO 1990, c H.19

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontarios-equity-and-inclusive-education-strategy-2009>

<sup>4</sup> Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2014

<sup>5</sup> April 22, 2013,

<https://www.ontario.ca/document/education-ontario-policy-and-program-direction/policyprogram-memorandum-119>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ontario.ca/document/education-ontario-policy-and-program-direction/policyprogram-memorandum-1>

The HDSB's "*Human Rights Equity Action and Accountability Plan: The Way Forward*"<sup>7</sup> outlines the Board's four key areas of focus:

- Classroom Instruction, School/Workplace Practices
- Leadership, Governance & Human Resources
- Data Collection, Integration & Reporting
- Organizational

"The Way Forward" includes specific strategies to guide the work, and related actions and accountability measures, to effect positive change in achieving the equity and inclusion goals outlined in this Policy.

### **SHARED AND COMMITTED LEADERSHIP**

The principle of shared and committed leadership recognizes that all partners in education – including community partners, families, and students – are responsible for preparing students to live successfully with agency and dignity in a diverse society.

The Halton District School Board will engage in ongoing collaborative leadership relationships with its many communities so that the perspectives and experiences of all students can be recognized and reflected. The HDSB will work with its educational partners to provide leadership that is responsive to the diverse nature of Ontario society. The HDSB will continually seek to identify and challenge biases that impact student achievement, and student and staff well-being.

Learning opportunities will be provided to students, school and system leaders, teachers, support staff, and trustees to provide an understanding and promote implementation of a shared responsibility for leadership.

### **INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT PRACTICES**

The Halton District School Board is committed to providing students with curriculum that expands their knowledge, experience, skills and perspectives so that they are prepared to navigate complex and diverse environments.

The Halton District School Board recognizes and acknowledges historical influences on the present day curriculum, including an Eurocentric and colonial perspective that has contributed to systemic barriers for many historically and currently disenfranchised groups and communities. The HDSB is committed to curriculum materials and assessment and evaluation practices that identify, challenge and address such barriers.

The Board's commitment is reflected in its "*Selection of Instructional and Library Resources*" Administrative Procedure,<sup>8</sup> which outlines expectations with respect to the choice and use of learning materials in all aspects of curriculum delivery, including assessment and evaluation.

### **MENTAL HEALTH CONNECTION TO EQUITY & INCLUSION**

The Halton District School Board recognizes the link between equity and inclusion, and the mental health and well-being of students. The HDSB also recognizes the importance and need for culturally responsive and relevant mental health and well-being professional support staff to meet diverse needs.

The Halton District School Board is committed to providing professional learning that recognizes the diversity and intersectionality of lived experience and addresses stigma, bias or discriminatory barriers that could impact the mental health and well-being of students and/or staff.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://hreaa.hdsb.ca/>

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<https://www.hdsb.ca/our-board/Pages/Policies%20and%20Administrative%20Procedures/Board-Administrative-Procedure.s.aspx>

## **RELIGIOUS/CREED ACCOMMODATION**

The Halton District School Board recognizes and affirms every individual's right to follow or not to follow religious and/or creed beliefs and practices, free from discriminatory or harassing behaviour.

The HDSB will take all reasonable steps to provide accommodations to staff and students, as further outlined in the Board's "Religious and Creed Accommodations" Administrative Procedure.<sup>9</sup>

## **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

The Halton District School Board is committed to ongoing staff development and professional learning to support an equitable, anti-oppressive, accepting, safe and inclusive, positive climate.

The Halton District School Board will provide HDSB staff, students and trustees, volunteers and parents/guardians with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviour to identify discriminatory biases, racism, oppression, and systemic barriers, and promote a positive school climate.

The Halton District School Board will also provide staff with the opportunity to access equity and inclusivity training to inform upholding the rights protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code and adherence to Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy.

The Board recognizes that all professional learning materials should be non-discriminatory, inclusive and representative of the Board's diverse communities.

## **EMPLOYMENT AND PROMOTION PRACTICES**

The Halton District School Board recognizes that there are employment and promotion practices that have historically had a discriminatory impact and disproportionately affected some groups. The HDSB is therefore committed to:

- the identification and removal of systemic barriers in its recruitment, hiring and promotion process;
- ensuring that hiring and promotion practices are consistent with the Board's statutory duties, including under the *Human Rights Code*;
- promoting representation of diversity at all levels of the school system, including in opportunities for advancement, and in the application of knowledge, skills and experience.

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

Halton District School Board is committed to embedding principles of human rights, equity and inclusion in all learning and working environments within the Board, to support a positive school climate and a culture of mutual respect.

The Halton District School Board recognizes that a positive school climate is reflective of a diversity of experiences and identities, free from discrimination and harassment, and embraces the rights embodied in the Ontario Human Rights Code and Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

## **SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS**

The Halton District School Board recognizes and endeavours to establish and maintain collaborative relationships with diverse communities so that the perspectives and experiences of all students, families, and employees are welcomed, recognized and considered.

The HDSB is committed to:

- Maintaining and developing collaborative school-community relationships that enable representation and active participation from all the communities it serves.
- Encouraging the perspectives and experiences of students, families, and employees as a means of informing system direction.
- Promoting on-going, open dialogue in partnership with historically and currently disenfranchised groups and communities.
- Ensuring that all parents/guardians have opportunities for meaningful participation in the school system.

The Halton District School Board will support the work of the Human Right Equity Action & Accountability Advisory Committee (“**HREAAC**”), which considers and makes recommendations on human rights and equity initiatives that advance the HDSB’s focus on student achievement.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY**

The HDSB will implement assessment and monitoring processes to ensure that the principles of Ontario’s Equity & Inclusive Education Strategy are embedded into all policies, procedures, programs, guidelines, and practices and will communicate these results to the community. To this end, HDSB will:

- develop an Assessment Tool based on the requirements of this Policy and apply it to the development and review of all HDSB policies, procedures, programs and initiatives.
- ensure that the annual Board Improvement Plan is aligned with the commitments of this Policy and Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, and tracking to monitor progress and assess the effectiveness of this Policy and related procedures;
- ensure that this policy, and related policies and procedures, are available to students, administrators, teachers, parents/guardians, Caregivers, school staff, school councils, and volunteers. Access will be made available in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*<sup>10</sup> and for those whose first Language is other than English;
- publish an annual Human Rights and Equity report from the Director of Education, which will inform the Ministry of Education and the local community about the progress the HDSB has made in meeting the goals outlined in this Policy.

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<sup>10</sup> SO 2005, c 11, and the Integrated Accessibility Standards in O Reg. 191/11.

## **Cross References:**

### **Legislation:**

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Ontario Human Rights Code

Education Act<sup>11</sup>

Anti-Racism Act 2017<sup>12</sup> and Data Standards Regulation<sup>13</sup>

### **Ministry of Education**

PPM 119 “Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools”

PPM 128 “The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Boards Code of Conduct”

Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy 2009

Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation, 2014

### **Provincial Resources**

Ontario’s Anti-Racism Strategic Plan, 2017<sup>14</sup>

Ontario’s Anti-Racism Strategic Plan Review 2022<sup>15</sup>

Human Rights Commission’s “Policy and Guidelines on Racism and Racial Discrimination”<sup>16</sup>

### **HDSB Policies**

Employment Equity

First Nations Self-Identification

Respectful Workplace

### **HDSB Administrative Procedures**

Human Rights Equity Action and Accountability Plan

Selection of Instructional and Library Resources

Religious and Creed Accommodations

Positive School Climate

Gender Identity and Gender Expression

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<sup>11</sup> RSO 1990 c E 5

<sup>12</sup> SO 2017, c 15

<sup>13</sup> O Reg 276/18

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontarios-anti-racism-strategic-plan>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.ontario.ca/page/consultation-ontarios-anti-racism-strategic-plan-review>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-and-guidelines-racism-and-racial-discrimination>