

<b>TOPIC:</b>	<b>Equity and Inclusive Education Policy</b>
<b>EFFECTIVE:</b>	<b>January 2013</b>
<b>CROSS-REFERENCE:</b>	<b>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</b>
<b>REVISION DATE:</b>	<b>September 2017</b>
<b>RESPONSIBILITY:</b>	<b>Superintendent of Education</b>

**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 marginalization<sup>1</sup>.

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.

**Glossary**

Reviewing Administrative Procedures and Policies through the Equity Lens<sup>2</sup>

Every year, a number of administrative procedures and policies are reviewed and/or updated. The following ideas are to be considered when applying the Equity Lens to the review/update.

- **Language Used:** always use *People First Language*, e.g. student with a learning disability, employee on a medical leave, people with disabilities, people who are disabled, etc. Do not use the term “handicapped” – a “handicap” is a barrier to accessibility not a person.  
**Students:** do not refer to the students as ELLs or Special Ed students. Use *English Language Learners* or *students with special education needs*.
- **Aboriginal Peoples:** are not members of the multicultural communities. They are original peoples and must be referred to as *Native peoples, First Nation, Métis or Inuit*. They are recognized in the Canadian Constitution. Refrain from using the term “our aboriginal people” – perception is negative.

<sup>1</sup> 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)

<sup>2</sup> Inclusive language Guidelines, Halton District School Board, 2008

- **Use of term *Family*:** for most messages, this is preferable to *parent/guardian/caregiver* as it recognizes many different family configurations, e.g. no-parent family, same-sex family, foster family, extended family, single parent family, etc. For formal school documents, parent/guardian signatures must be stated.
- **Use terms such** as “a variety of cultures”, “a range of cultures” or “diverse cultures” rather than “other cultures” or “different cultures” as these terms imply a norm and suggest superiority.
- **More terms and uses:** *permanent resident* not landed immigrant, *developing countries* not underdeveloped or third world countries, *your country of origin/your culture/your first language* rather than “your old country/your old culture/your old language”.
- **Religion/Faith/Belief Systems:** use “place of worship” “sacred writings”; use “a variety of faiths or belief systems” or “various faiths or belief systems” rather than “other religions, other faiths, other belief systems”.
- **Gender:** do not use *he, him, his* to refer to gender. Use *he or she, him or her, his or her*. Try to avoid using pronouns and do not use *he/she, him/her or s/he*. Another strategy is to use a noun rather than a pronoun or if a pronoun is preferred, use “their”.
- **Sexual Orientation:** use language that is inclusive – do not identify families exclusively as including a mother and father; e.g. use the term **parent** or **partner** rather than boyfriend, husband, wife, girlfriend. Ensure no implicit or explicit value is attached to female-male domestic or social relationships.
- **Race:** ensure individuals or groups are represented as diverse in language, culture, faith, religion, and social norms.
- **Lists:** put the list in alphabetical order to remove any notion of hierarchy.
- **School Break terms** – use winter and spring break rather than using any faith holiday designation during this time

Recognize, at this writing, the language is appropriate and may change over time.

**The Board will:**

**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, training and employment practices, consistent with the principles of the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

**2. SHARED AND COMMITTED LEADERSHIP**

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

### **3. SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS**

- Establish and maintain collaborative relationships with diverse communities so 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 each student may maximize her or his learning potential.

### **5. RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION**

- Acknowledge each individual's right to follow or not to follow religious beliefs and practices free from discriminatory or harassing behavior; and is committed 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**

- 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 *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.