



TITLE: EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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1.0 OBJECTIVE

To ensure equity of opportunity and equity of access to the full range of programs, services, and resources offered by the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (“the District”) to foster successful educational achievement and social outcomes.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

In this policy,

- 2.1 **Diversity** refers to the presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.
- 2.2 **Discrimination** refers to unfair or prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups on the basis of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed (religion), sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status, or disability, as set out in the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, or on the basis of other, similar factors. Discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional, has the effect of preventing or limiting access to opportunities, benefits, or advantages that are available to other members of society. Discrimination may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.
- 2.3 **Equity** refers to 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.
- 2.4 **Inclusive Education** refers to 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.

- 2.5 **School Community** refers to students, parents/guardians, trustees, staff, contractors and service providers, volunteers and community members.

3.0 POLICY

- 3.1 The District is committed to promoting student achievement and well-being for all students.
- 3.2 The District is committed to the identification and elimination of discriminatory bias and systemic barriers that may limit access to, and opportunity for, effective student engagement and achievement.
- 3.3 The District confirms and upholds the principles enshrined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Constitution Act, 1982*, and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.
- 3.4 The District believes that equity of opportunity and equity of access to all programs, services, and resources are critical to the well-being of those who serve our schools and to the achievement of successful outcomes by all those whom we serve.
- 3.5 The District is committed to fairness, equity, and inclusive education as essential principles of our school system; our policies, programs, operations, and practices will reflect these values.

4.0 SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES

The District's commitment to equity and inclusive education will be guided by the Ministry of Education's *Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119, "Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools"*. Further details and specific action statements are contained in the "Equity and Inclusive Education" procedure – PR.618.CUR.

- 4.1 The District shall serve its staff, students and families in diverse communities by:
- a) incorporating the principles of equity and inclusive education into its policies, programs, procedures, and practices so that an equity and inclusive education focus is an integral part of the District's operations and structures;
 - b) ensuring existing policies, programs, procedures, and practices are reviewed to be in accordance with the District's equity and inclusive education policy;
 - c) ensuring policies, programs, procedures, and practices are drafted, implemented and reviewed in accordance with the District's equity and inclusive education policy; and
 - d) implementing positive employment practices that support equitable hiring, mentoring, retention, promotion, and succession planning.
- 4.2 The District shall provide informed leadership to improve student achievement and to close achievement gaps for students by identifying and addressing discrimination by:

- a) communicating the District's equity and inclusive education policy to staff, students, parents, and community;
 - b) identifying education and/or training required to assist staff, students, parents in implementing the equity and inclusive education policy; and
 - c) ensuring the Director of Education, or designee liaises with the Ministry and other district boards to share challenges, promising practices and resources.
- 4.3 The District shall establish and maintain collaborative relationships with diverse communities so that the perspectives and experiences of all students, families and employees are recognized and addressed by:
- a) reviewing the structure of existing committees and partnerships to help ensure they reflect the principles of equity and inclusive education;
 - b) expanding 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;
 - c) drawing upon the expertise of related partners to explore innovative ways of sharing resources that can help to meet the diverse needs of its students and provide new and relevant learning opportunities; and
 - d) developing and sustaining on-going relationships with community agencies to ensure support in both student achievement and well-being.
- 4.4 The District shall deliver an inclusive curriculum and review resources, instruction, and assessment and evaluation practices in order to identify and address discriminatory biases so that each student may maximize their learning potential. This includes:
- a) supporting staff in the use of inclusive curriculum and assessment practices and effective instructional strategies that reflect the diverse needs of students and the learning pathways they are taking;
 - b) providing students with authentic and relevant opportunities to learn about diverse histories, cultures and perspectives;
 - c) reviewing resources, instruction, assessment and evaluation practices to identify and eliminate stereotypes, discriminatory biases and systemic barriers;
 - d) identifying and addressing inconsistent standards and discriminatory biases in the way students' work is assessed and evaluated; and
 - e) being sensitive to new curriculum materials when purchasing decisions are being made.
- 4.5 The District acknowledges each individual's right to follow or not follow religious beliefs and practices free from discriminatory or harassing behaviour and is committed to taking all reasonable steps to provide religious accommodation to students and staff. Please refer to P 086 and PR 086 CUR.

- 4.6 The District shall endeavour to ensure a respectful, positive school climate and learning environment, by:
- a) monitoring school environments through climate surveys every two years and incorporating questions on equity and inclusive education; and
 - b) addressing any expression of bias or discrimination in any form by its staff, students, parents/guardians, contractors and service providers, volunteers or visitors who are on District premises or participating in District-sponsored activities.
- 4.7 The District shall provide the school community with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours needed to identify and address discriminatory biases and systemic barriers by:
- a) allocating resources to provide opportunities for staff to participate in training on topics of equity and inclusive education;
 - b) providing information for students and parents to increase their knowledge and understanding of equity and inclusive education; and
 - c) identifying and drawing upon existing expertise, as appropriate, with respect to equity and inclusive education within the District, other school districts, community partners and agencies.
- 4.8 The District shall assess and monitor its progress in implementing an equity and inclusive education policy by:
- a) embedding equity and inclusive principles into board and school improvement plans and other District policies, programs, procedures, and practices;
 - b) communicating the equity and inclusive education policy, initiatives and results to all stakeholders and making it readily available on the Board's website; and
 - c) integrating updates of the District's progress in the Director of Education's annual report.

5.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Education Act, 1998, section 8.1 (29.1)

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Constitution Act, 1982

Ontario Human Rights Code

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119, "Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools" (June 24, 2009)

Board Policy P.121.GOV: Accessibility

Board Policy P.053.HR: Alleged Harassment

Board Policy P.119.HR: Respectful Workplace

Board Policy P.032.SCO: Safe Schools

Board Policy P.086.CUR: Religious Accommodation Policy (replaces Religious Holy Days)

Board Policy PR. 586.CUR: Religious Accommodation Procedure (replaces Religious Holy Days)

Board Procedure PR.666.GOV: Accessibility (Customer Service Standards)

Board Procedure PR.652.HR: Respectful Workplace
Board Procedure PR.521.SCO: Safe Schools
Board Procedure PR.618.CUR: Equity and Inclusive Education Procedure