



Adopted	April, 2007
Last Revised	September 8, 2010
Review Date	September, 2015

EQUITY AND INCLUSIVITY EDUCATION

1. PURPOSE

The Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board is committed to excellence in education and equitable educational outcomes for all students. The board is committed to the elimination of discrimination as outlined in Ontario's Ministry of Education *Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. Equity of opportunity and equity of access to all programs, services and resources are critical to the well-being of those who serve our school system and to the achievement of successful outcomes by all those whom we serve. The board is engaged in a dynamic process of building a community free from bias and harassment in a culturally diverse and interdependent world based on the following guiding principles and areas of focus.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Equitable and Inclusive Education:

- is a foundation of excellence and is a fundamental requirement for educational excellence and high standards of student achievement;
- meets individual needs by providing conditions and interventions needed to help every student succeed;
- identifies and eliminates barriers;
- promotes a sense of belonging which contributes to every student's sense of well-being;
- involves the broader community and recognizes that school-community partnerships are an essential component of an equitable and inclusive education system;
- builds on and enhances previous and existing initiatives; and
- is demonstrated throughout the system.

3. DEFINITIONS

Diversity: 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.

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.

4. AREAS OF FOCUS

4.1. Policy, procedures and programs

The board serves students in diverse communities by incorporating the principles of equity and inclusive education into all aspects of its operations, structures, policies, procedures, programs, guidelines and practices.

4.2. Shared and committed leadership

The board provides informed leadership to improve student achievement and to close achievement gaps for students by endeavouring to identify and address all forms of discrimination consistent with the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

4.3. School-community relationships

The board establishes and maintains partnerships with diverse communities so that the perspectives and experiences of all students are recognized and their needs are met.

4.4. Inclusive curriculum and assessment practices

Curriculum resources, instruction, and assessment and evaluation practices are inclusive and reviewed in order to identify and address discriminatory biases so that each student may maximize his or her learning potential.

4.5. Religious accommodation

The board 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.

The *Religious Accommodation Resource Guide* provides further information regarding steps to be taken to provide religious accommodation for students and staff.

4.6. School climate and the prevention of discrimination and harassment

School communities should be respectful, positive school climates and learning environments, free from discrimination and harassment.

4.7. Professional learning

Professional learning opportunities will be provided to staff and students to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours needed to identify and eliminate discriminatory biases and systemic barriers under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

4.8 Accountability and transparency

The implementation of equity and inclusive education is assessed and monitored through the system plan and these results are communicated to the community.

Legal References:

- *Education Act*
- *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*
- *Ontario Human Rights Code*
- *Employment Standards Act*

District References:

- [Board Policy No. 1 - Board Mission and Goals](#)
- [Administrative Procedure 133 - Accessibility Standards for Customer Service](#)
- [Administrative Procedure 136 - Multicultural/Multiracial Understanding](#)
- [Administrative Procedure 137 - Aboriginal Education: Voluntary, Confidential Self-Identification](#)
- [Administrative Procedure 139 - Harassment](#)
- [Administrative Procedure 145 - District Code of Conduct and School Codes of Conduct](#)
- [Administrative Procedure 225 - Character Development](#)
- [Resource Guide: Religious Accommodation](#)

Resources:

Ministry of Education:

- *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* (2009)
- *Equity and Inclusive Education Guidelines for Policy Development* (2009)
- Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 Developing and implementing equity and inclusive education policies in Ontario schools