

# *Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools* .....

## **GUIDELINES FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION**



..... *Realizing the Promise of Diversity*

2014



support every child  
reach every student

 Ontario



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*Realizing the Promise of Diversity*

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Une publication équivalente est disponible en français sous le titre suivant :  
*Équité et éducation inclusive dans les écoles de l'Ontario : Lignes directrices pour  
l'élaboration et la mise en œuvre de politiques, 2014*

This publication is available on the Ministry of Education's website,  
at [www.edu.gov.on.ca](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca).





## INTRODUCTION

*Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation* has been revised and updated to reflect the progress made since *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* was released in 2009, including amendments to the Education Act made through the Accepting Schools Act, which was passed on September 1, 2012.

We have come a long way towards realizing our vision of equity and inclusive education in Ontario schools. However, realizing that vision must be understood as a journey, not a destination. The work must be ongoing to ensure that our schools continue to provide caring, inclusive, safe, and accepting environments that support the achievement and well-being of every student. Equity and inclusive education is an ongoing process that requires shared commitment and leadership if we are to meet the ever-evolving, complex issues and concerns of our communities and schools. This revised resource guide is provided to support school boards and schools in the important work of continuing to foster an equitable and inclusive education system.

An equitable, inclusive education system is one in which all students, parents,<sup>1</sup> and other members of the school community are welcomed and respected, and every student is supported and inspired to succeed in a culture of high expectations for learning. Equity and inclusive education are fundamental to the Ontario government's renewed vision for education, as set out in *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario* (available at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/about/renewedVision.pdf>). Since Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy was first published in 2009, a renewed vision for education has been established, which builds on the system's three priorities: increasing student achievement, closing gaps in student achievement, and increasing public confidence in publicly funded education. It encompasses these goals and reaches deeper and broader, raising expectations both for the system and for the potential of children and students.

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1. In this document, *parent(s)* refers to parent(s) and guardian(s).

The renewed goals for education are as follows:

- **Achieving excellence:** Children and students of all ages will achieve high levels of academic performance, acquire valuable skills, and demonstrate good citizenship. Educators will be supported in learning continuously and will be recognized as among the best in the world.
- **Ensuring equity:** All children and students will be inspired to reach their full potential, with access to rich learning experiences that begin at birth and continue into adulthood.
- **Promoting well-being:** All children and students will develop enhanced mental and physical health, a positive sense of self and belonging, and the skills to make positive choices.
- **Enhancing public confidence:** Ontarians will continue to have confidence in a publicly funded education system that helps develop new generations of confident, capable, and caring citizens.

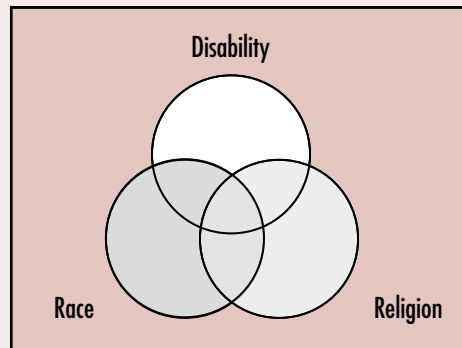
Equity and inclusive education aims to understand, identify, address, and eliminate the biases, barriers, and power dynamics that limit students' prospects for learning, growing, and fully contributing to society. Barriers may be related to sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, race, ethnic origin, religion, socio-economic background, physical or mental ability, or other factors. It is now recognized that several factors may intersect to create additional barriers for some students. These barriers and biases, whether overt or subtle, intentional or unintentional, need to be identified and addressed.

We believe that Ontario's diversity is one of its greatest assets – both today and for the future. Embracing this diversity and moving beyond tolerance and celebration to inclusivity and respect will help us reach our goal of making Ontario's education system the most equitable in the world. Everyone in our publicly funded education system – regardless of background or personal circumstances – must feel engaged and included. Realizing the promise of our diversity is a continuous process grounded in actively respecting and valuing the full range of our differences. Providing a high-quality education for all is a key means of fostering social cohesion, within an inclusive society where diversity is affirmed in a framework of common values that promote the well-being of all citizens. In reaffirming the values of fairness, equity, and respect as essential principles of our publicly funded education system, the Ontario government's equity and inclusive education strategy helps to ensure that all students have the opportunities they need to fulfil their potential.



### Intersecting Grounds of Discrimination

Two or more of the prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Ontario Human Rights Code, and other factors, can intersect in one individual or group and create additional biases or barriers. For example, the prohibited grounds of race, religion, and disability can intersect in one individual.



In order to achieve equity and inclusive education in Ontario schools, we must continue to pursue the following three goals:

- 1. Shared and committed leadership** by the ministry, school boards,<sup>2</sup> and schools plays a critical role in eliminating discrimination through the identification and removal of bias and barriers. Achieving equity is a shared responsibility; establishing an equitable and inclusive education system requires commitment from all education partners.
- 2. Equity and inclusive education policies and practices** support positive learning environments so that all students feel engaged in and empowered by what they are learning, supported by the teachers and staff from whom they are learning, and welcome in the environment in which they are learning. Students, teachers, and staff learn and work in an environment that is caring, safe, inclusive, and accepting of all.
- 3. Accountability and transparency** are effectively demonstrated through the use of clear measures of success (based on established indicators) and through communication to the public of progress towards achieving equity for all students. Accountability is necessary to maintain and enhance public confidence in the education system. Equity and inclusive education principles are to be embedded, as part of a board's multi-year strategic plan, in the school effectiveness review process, in board and school improvement plans, and in classroom practices.

2. In this document, *school boards* or *boards* refer to both district school boards and school authorities.

## How to Use These Guidelines

These guidelines are designed to help Ontario school boards review and/or continue to develop, implement, and monitor equity and inclusive education policies that support student achievement and well-being, in accordance with the principles and commitments set out in *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* and Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) No. 119 (April 22, 2013) (see Appendix 3). Each board has in place an equity and inclusive education policy and an implementation plan that are consistent with the guiding principles and goals set out in these documents. Following the review of its equity and inclusive education policy, a board may revise its policy to continue to provide safe, inclusive, and accepting learning environments for all. These revisions may range from small refinements in the equity and inclusive education policy to the addition of new policies and guidelines that better reflect and promote the principles of equity and inclusive education. As well, when it scrutinizes its other policies and practices during the regular policy review cycle, a board shall take steps to embed the principles of equity and inclusive education into all aspects of the learning environment to support student achievement and well-being.

The guidelines provided here offer practical strategies and advice, along with examples, templates, and web links that boards can use to inform policy review and ongoing development, implementation, and monitoring. The sections that follow include:

- information about the legislative and policy context and the historical context for the guidelines (p. 9);
- an overview of ministry expectations with regard to the ongoing policy development and implementation process (p. 14);
- a section on policy development setting out a process and framework for reviewing and revising an equity and inclusive education policy, including expanded descriptions of the eight areas of focus outlined in PPM No. 119 (p. 15);
- a section on implementation outlining steps to be taken at the board and school levels (p. 36);
- a section on monitoring and reporting that identifies potential indicators (p. 48);
- a variety of practical and self-reflective tools and templates a board can use to review, revise and/or refine, implement, monitor, and communicate its policy and progress (Appendices 1 and 2);
- additional resources a board can refer to in ongoing policy development and implementation and in monitoring progress (Appendices 3–7).

## **Where to Get Help**

The Inclusive Education Branch and the regional offices of the Ministry of Education can help and support a board in reviewing, revising, implementing, and monitoring its equity and inclusive education policy and related policies. In addition, boards are encouraged to draw upon the expertise and numerous resources that are available in the broader community, including various universities and faculties of education, federations and associations, unions, service organizations, and other community partners.

## **Legislative and Policy Context**

The strategy is designed to promote fundamental human rights as described in the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, with which school boards are required to comply, subject to subsection 93(1) of the Constitution Act, 1867, and section 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

On September 1, 2012, the Accepting Schools Act, which amended the Education Act, came into force. It sets out requirements for all school boards to provide safe, inclusive, and accepting learning environments in which every student can succeed. This legislation is part of a comprehensive action plan that builds on the successes of the equity and inclusive education and safe schools strategies. This multifaceted plan focuses on a whole-school approach that involves all partners in order to bring about necessary systemic change that will foster safe, inclusive, and accepting learning environments.

As outlined in PPM No. 119, “Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools” (April 22, 2013), all school boards are required to develop and implement an equity and inclusive education policy. The Education Act (subsection 8(1), paragraph 29.1) gives the Minister of Education the authority to require all school boards to submit the policy to the Minister and implement changes to the policy as directed by the Minister.

A school board’s equity and inclusive education policy is expected to be comprehensive, covering the prohibited grounds of discrimination set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code. The policy must also adhere to the requirements of existing regulations, policy/program memoranda (PPMs), and ministry policy, including (but not limited to) the following:

- PPM No. 108, “Opening or Closing Exercises in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools” (January 12, 1989)
- R.R.O. 1990, Regulation 298, “Operation of Schools – General”, sections 27–29, “Religion in Schools”, which outlines the requirements initially provided in PPM No. 112, “Education About Religion in the Public Elementary and Secondary Schools” (revoked August 24, 2009)

- *Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Program Requirements, 2011* (OS), section 6.1.3, “Secondary School Literacy Graduation Requirement”, which outlines the requirements previously provided in PPM No. 127, “The Secondary School Literacy Graduation Requirement” (revoked October 10, 2012)
- Ontario Regulation 181/98, “Identification and Placement of Exceptional Pupils”

A board, as part of its equity and inclusive education policy, is to review an existing or develop a new religious accommodation guideline consistent with the Ontario Human Rights Code (see the Ontario Human Rights Commission’s *Policy on Creed and the Accommodation of Religious Observances*, 2009), and communicate this guideline to the school community.

It is recognized that some existing board policies have also responded to related issues or factors that are not covered in the Code but that could act as systemic barriers to student learning. These factors may be included in the board’s equity and inclusive education policy.

All boards should also consult *English Language Learners / ESL and ELD Programs and Services: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2007*; the *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework, 2007*; and *Ontario’s Aménagement linguistique Policy for French-language Education*, including PPM No. 148, “Policies Governing Admission to French-Language Schools in Ontario” (April 22, 2009), and *L’admission, l’accueil et l’accompagnement des élèves dans les écoles de langue française de l’Ontario – Énoncé de politique et directives, 2009*.

The principles of equity and inclusion have guided special education policy since the Education Act was amended by the Education Amendment Act, 1980 (Bill 82), which required school boards to provide special education programs and services for students with disabilities. Ontario Regulation 181/98 further requires school boards to consider placing exceptional students into regular classes before considering placement in a special education class. In cases where students are placed in special education classes, reasons for doing so must be given. O. Reg. 181/98 also introduced the Individual Education Plan (IEP), which has since become the centrepiece for providing special education programs and services to students with special education needs. The IEP is an equity tool: it is designed to help ensure that appropriate educational accommodations or modifications are provided to students in order that they may attend school, achieve their full potential, and have every opportunity to access the curriculum and participate along with all other students in the life of the school.

Boards must follow the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2001) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005), as applicable. The former requires boards to prepare annual accessibility plans addressing a broad range of disability issues.

Boards and schools must continue to uphold the standards set out in the provincial Code of Conduct, in which respect for all is the overarching principle.

Ontario's equity and inclusive education strategy seeks to foster a culture of continuous improvement with progress demonstrated and communicated annually. School boards are encouraged to consider how these guidelines can support deeper implementation of their policies and further embed the principles of equity and inclusive education in all operations and learning environments. This also applies to new policies, programs, and initiatives that are implemented provincially to support children and youth (e.g., child care, early learning, and full-day kindergarten).

## **Historical Context**

The following policy/program memoranda of the ministry have, in recent years, served to support equity, human rights, and social justice issues:

- PPM No. 108, "Opening or Closing Exercises in the Public Elementary and Secondary Schools" (January 12, 1989), which pertains to the manner and content of opening and closing exercises
- PPM No. 112, "Education About Religion in the Public Elementary and Secondary Schools" (December 6, 1990; revoked August 24, 2009),<sup>3</sup> which pertained to the teaching of religion in the public elementary and secondary schools. It stated that education designed to teach about religion and moral values is permitted but indoctrination in a particular religious faith is not.
- Former PPM No. 119, "Development and Implementation of School Board Policies on Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity" (July 13, 1993; replaced June 24, 2009), which directed school boards to develop a policy on antiracism and ethnocultural equity.
- PPM No. 119, "Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools" (April 22, 2013), which updated and replaced the PPM dated June 24, 2009.

When the original PPM No.119 was issued in 1993, it noted that a Eurocentric perspective in education had the effect of limiting the contributions of people from a variety of different backgrounds and excluding the experiences, values, and viewpoints of members of racial and ethnocultural communities, as well as Aboriginal communities. The PPM required antiracism and ethnocultural equity policies in recognition of the fact that inequities of power and privilege limited opportunities for members of Aboriginal and racial and ethnocultural groups to fulfil their potential and to maximize their contribution to society. The policy outlined in the PPM reflected a commitment to eliminating racism in schools and in society at large by changing both individual behaviour and institutional policies and practices.

3. As stated on page 9, the policy outlined in PPM No. 112 was subsequently incorporated into regulation (R.R.O. 1990, Regulation 298, s. 27–29, "Religion in Schools").

The memoranda issued by the ministry before 2009 provided direction to school boards on how to help identify and eliminate discriminatory practices and systemic barriers so that all students would learn to respect diversity and develop confidence in their cultural and racial identities.

The ministry has made significant progress in recent years in addressing barriers and improving student achievement. Ontario's curriculum review process continues to be enhanced to help ensure that curriculum remains current and relevant, and all students see themselves reflected in it. A comprehensive Kindergarten to Grade 12 policy for English language learners is now in place (*English Language Learners / ESL and ELD Programs and Services: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2007*), as is the provincial Aboriginal education strategy (*Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework, 2007*). The ministry has also maintained its focus on providing current information to the field about evidence-based strategies for the instruction of students with special education needs (as reflected, for example, in *Learning for All: A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2013* (available at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/LearningforAll2013.pdf>), which evolved out of the earlier *Education for All: The Report of the Expert Panel on Literacy and Numeracy Instruction for Students With Special Education Needs, Kindergarten to Grade 6, 2005*).

The ministry remains firmly committed to the elimination of racism and of discrimination on the basis of disability. Although much good work has been done, and continues to be done, the presence of discriminatory biases and systemic barriers remains a concern. The 2007/2008 Annual Report of the Ontario Human Rights Commission (p. 48) showed that complaints based on race and disability outnumbered complaints based on any other prohibited grounds. As noted in the strategy document (p. 7), the Supreme Court of Canada in 2005 acknowledged that racial prejudice against visible minorities is so notorious and indisputable that its existence needs to be treated as a social fact. In addition, researchers have found that racial minority students and their parents tend to experience racism as a “collective attribute that is expressed overtly and indirectly” and not strictly as “isolated acts of overt individual prejudice” (Berger, n.d., p. 98). Educators, administrators, and school staff must maintain their focus on racism and disability to address these issues.

We need to work collectively to realize our vision of an equitable and inclusive education system, and to eliminate all types of systemic barriers from Ontario's schools and society. The equity and inclusive education strategy aims to close student achievement gaps by identifying and eliminating any biases, barriers, and power dynamics that may limit students' prospects for learning, growing, and contributing fully to society.

## **The Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and the Revised Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119**

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The strategy and PPM No. 119, “Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools” (revised April 22, 2013), recognize all the prohibited grounds of discrimination set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code and also acknowledge societal issues such as sexual harassment, gender-based violence, and socio-economic status. Furthermore, the strategy recognizes that factors such as race, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, and class often intersect to create additional barriers for some students. While racism continues to be a major focus, the strategy recognizes that Ontario’s publicly funded schools must increase their efforts to develop an approach that will respond to the full range of needs within the education community. Effective implementation is essential and is therefore a key component of this strategy.

### **Overview of Policy Development and Implementation**

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All boards must have an equity and inclusive education policy. The strategy, PPM No. 119, and the guidelines refer to and describe the eight areas of focus to be addressed in the equity and inclusive education policy while taking account of the prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Ontario Human Rights Code and other factors. In the policy development and implementation processes, a board has the flexibility to determine the approach that will best suit its local circumstances. For example, a board may consider how to accommodate the prohibited grounds of the Code within each area of focus or, alternatively, how to address each area of focus in light of the prohibited grounds under the Code.

Recognizing that achieving improvement across Ontario’s school boards takes time, the ministry provided for policy development and implementation to be phased in, initially over a four-year period. The ministry recognizes that while all boards now have equity and inclusive education policies, they are at different stages of implementation. The strategy seeks to foster a culture of continuous improvement, with progress demonstrated and communicated annually. Boards are expected to use the cyclical review process to embed the principles of equity and inclusive education into all aspects of their operations and learning environments in order to enhance support for student achievement and help close achievement gaps.



## POLICY DEVELOPMENT

**BOARDS WILL PROVIDE LEADERSHIP** to schools by regularly reviewing, revising, or refining their board equity and inclusive education policies and guidelines, or related procedures, to support, implement, and align with the strategy and PPM No. 119 (2013).

In reviewing, revising, or refining its policy, a board:

- has the flexibility to take into account local needs and circumstances such as geographical considerations, demographics, cultural needs, and the availability of board and community support and resources;
- is expected to consult widely with students, parents, principals, teachers, early childhood educators, and other staff as well as school councils; with its Special Education Advisory Committee, Parent Involvement Committee, Diversity Committee, and other appropriate committees; and with federations and unions, service organizations, and other community partners, in order to reflect the diversity of the broader educational community;
- must adhere to the provisions of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Education Act and regulations made under the act, and must respect all applicable collective agreements;
- should consult with its legal counsel and freedom-of-information coordinators to ensure that it is fulfilling all its legal responsibilities.



## **Guiding Principles**

In reviewing, revising, or refining its policy, a board must adhere to the guiding principles listed in the following box:

### **Guiding Principles of the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy**

Equity and inclusive education:

- is a foundation of excellence;  
*In a diverse society, equity is a fundamental requirement for educational excellence and high standards of student achievement.*
- meets individual needs;  
*Equity does not mean treating all students in the same way but, rather, responding to the individual needs of each student and providing the conditions and interventions needed to help him or her succeed.*
- identifies and eliminates barriers;  
*All students are supported equitably through the identification and removal of discriminatory barriers that limit their ability to achieve to their full potential.*
- promotes a sense of belonging;  
*Equity and inclusive education contribute to every student's sense of well-being.*
- involves the broad community;  
*Effective and meaningful school–community partnerships are an essential component of an equitable and inclusive education system.*
- builds on and enhances previous and existing initiatives;  
*Sound research and analysis of successful policies and practices form the basis for the development and sharing of resources.*
- is demonstrated throughout the system.  
*The ministry, school boards, and schools will incorporate principles of equity and inclusive education throughout their policies, programs, and practices.*

## **Areas of Focus**

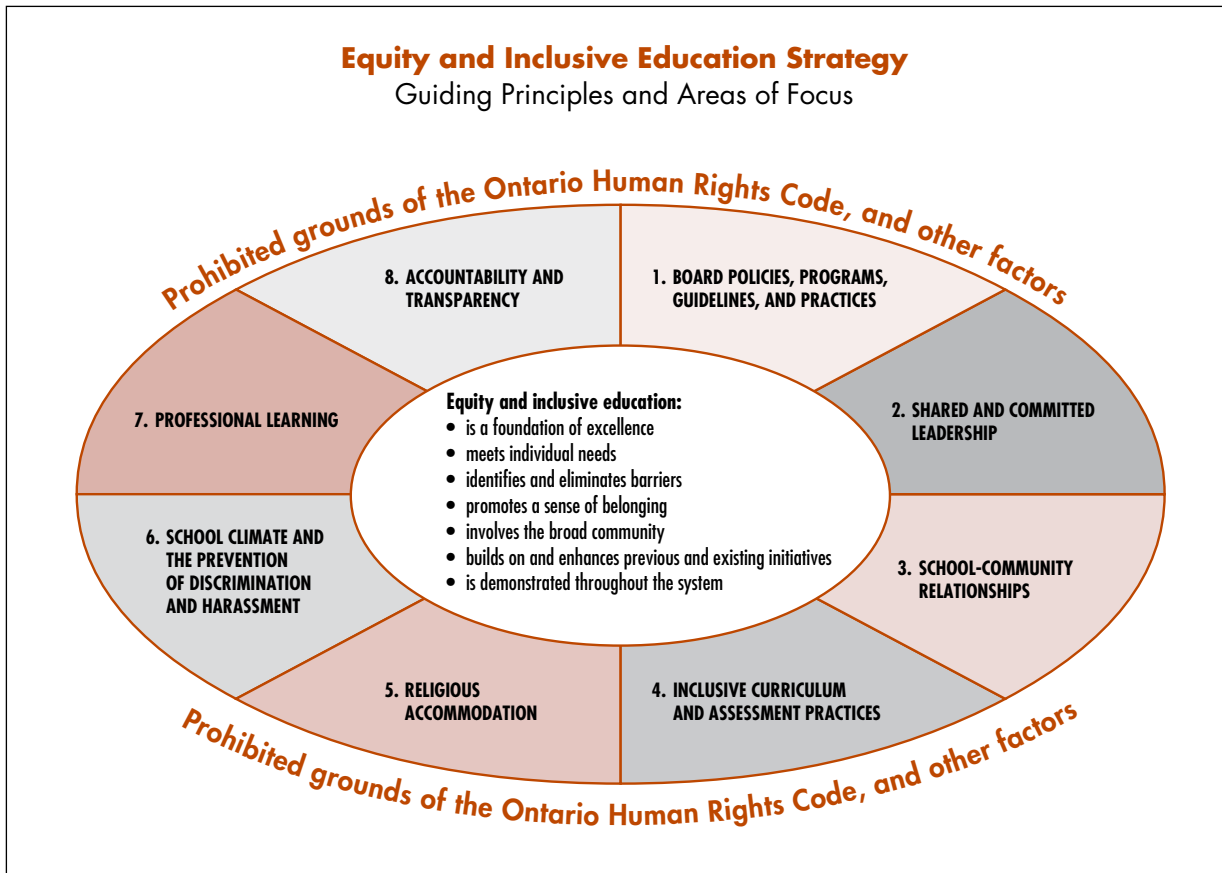
The guidelines, strategy, and PPM No. 119 identify the following areas of focus:

- 1.** Board policies, programs, guidelines, and practices
- 2.** Shared and committed leadership
- 3.** School–community relationships
- 4.** Inclusive curriculum and assessment practices
- 5.** Religious accommodation

- 6. School climate and the prevention of discrimination and harassment
- 7. Professional learning
- 8. Accountability and transparency

All eight areas of focus must be represented in a board’s equity and inclusive education policy. Some boards have been able to build upon the good work they have already done by incorporating previously existing equity and/or antiracism/ethnocultural policy or policies into their current equity and inclusive education policy. The equity and inclusive education policy must include a statement articulating the board’s vision and commitment to the strategy. A mission statement for each of the eight areas of focus should also be provided. Each board may use its own approved process and format for further policy development or revision.

The diagram “Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy: Guiding Principles and Areas of Focus” illustrates the eight areas of focus and their relationship to the Ontario Human Rights Code and the guiding principles of the equity and inclusive education strategy.



To assist a board in reviewing, revising, or refining its equity and inclusive education policy, sample policy templates developed by the Ontario Education Services Corporation are available at <http://www.oesc-cseo.org/English/EquityInclusivity.html>. The wording of the templates may be modified to suit the mission and structure of each board.

## **Action Items by Area of Focus**

When these guidelines were first released in 2009, the action items outlined in the following sections provided a framework to assist school boards in the development of their equity and inclusive education policies and implementation plans. All boards now have an equity and inclusive education policy in place and are expected to continue implementation to further embed the principles of equity and inclusive education into all aspects of their operations and learning environments.

### **1. Board policies, programs, guidelines, and practices**

## ACTION ITEMS

### **Boards will:**

- review and revise existing equity and inclusive education policies;
- implement equity and inclusive education policies;
- embed equity and inclusive education principles in board and school improvement plans;
- implement positive employment practices that support equitable hiring, mentoring, retention, promotion, and succession planning.

### **Schools will:**

- develop and implement strategies to engage students, parents, and the broader community actively in the review, development, and implementation of initiatives to support and promote equity and inclusive education;
- implement board equity and inclusive education policies, programs, and action plans that reflect the needs of their diverse school communities.

This area of focus establishes the framework for policy development and implementation in all the other areas of focus.

### *Equity and inclusive education policy*

A school board must ensure that all board policies, programs, procedures, and practices are aligned with the board's equity and inclusive education policy and with the requirements set out in PPM No. 119 and the strategy.

### *Policy review*

In the course of its policy review cycle, a board is expected to embed the principles of equity and inclusive education in all its policies and practices and to integrate an equity and inclusive education focus into its way of doing business and all operations of its schools, including instructional practices. This will support high levels of student achievement, reduced gaps in student achievement, and student well-being.

All the board's policies, guidelines, programs, practices, and services should reflect the diverse viewpoints, needs, and aspirations of the broader community. Discriminatory biases and systemic barriers to equity and inclusive education should be identified and addressed so that students can see themselves represented in the curriculum, programs, culture, and teaching, administrative, and support staff of the school.

### *Employment practices*

Equitable employment practices support the fair treatment of all working people in Ontario. A board should make every effort to identify and remove discriminatory biases and systemic barriers that may limit the opportunities of individuals from diverse communities for employment, mentoring, retention, promotion, and succession planning in all board and school positions. Boards may, for example, choose to undertake employment system reviews and work on broadening recruitment pools. Board and school staff should reflect the diversity within the community and be capable of understanding and responding to the experiences of the diverse groups within the board's jurisdiction. Such measures bring tangible benefits. Organizations are strengthened when employers can draw upon a broad range of talents, skills, and perspectives: in this regard, schools have a pivotal role in developing the workforce and citizens of tomorrow. Implementing equitable employment practices promotes a positive, welcoming work and learning environment. As well, school–community relations improve when students, parents, and community members see themselves represented in their educational institutions.

*The Rainbow District School Board recognizes the valuable insights and cultural history that First Nations teachers bring into a school environment. The board partnered with the local First Nations community bands to recruit Ojibwe teachers by extending its outreach and communications efforts through advertising, the distribution of a brochure, and attendance at university employment fairs. This has resulted in the hiring of Ojibwe teachers as well as Aboriginal support workers.*

### **The Board Leadership Development Strategy (BLDS)**

As part of the Ontario Leadership Strategy (OLS), every school board is provided with funding and support to develop and implement a Board Leadership Development Strategy. The BLDS assists boards in promoting positive leadership. It can be used to identify and address systemic barriers that may impede fair practice with respect to hiring, mentoring, promotion, and succession planning. Boards use their BLDS to foster high-quality leadership by implementing effective strategies in four key areas: recruiting and selecting leaders, placing and transferring leaders, developing leaders, and coordinating support for leaders. More information about the BLDS, including the BLDS manual, is available at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/leadership/strategy.html>.

## **2. Shared and committed leadership**

### ACTION ITEMS

#### **Boards will:**

- identify a contact person to liaise with the ministry and other boards to share challenges, promising practices, and resources;
- provide opportunities for students, school and system leaders, teachers, support staff, and trustees to participate in equity and inclusive education professional learning, and leadership initiatives.

The principle of shared and committed leadership recognizes that all partners in education – including community partners, parents, and students – are responsible for preparing students to live in a diverse society. However, bringing change to instructional practices and the learning culture requires strong, focused leadership from, in particular, school board trustees, directors of education, superintendents, principals, and teachers. Boards and schools are expected to provide leadership

that is responsive to the diverse nature of Ontario's communities and committed to identifying and removing discriminatory biases and systemic barriers to learning.

The District Effectiveness Framework, an essential component of the Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF), outlines nine characteristics of strong school districts. These characteristics encompass districts' purposes, the coherence of instructional guidance systems, the evidence that district staff use for decision making (and how they use it), the nature of their improvement processes, and approaches to capacity building. These key characteristics also include the extent to which elements of the organization are aligned around district purposes and priorities, approaches to leadership development, the nature of trustee governance, and the quality of relationships throughout the district and beyond. The District Effectiveness Framework is available at <http://live.iel.immix.ca/content/framework>.

### *System leadership*

Effective school and system leaders, as reflected in the principles of the ministry's Ontario Leadership Strategy (OLS), promote the development of collaborative environments in which participants share a commitment to and support of equity and inclusive education practices. This approach supports the active engagement of students, parents, federations and unions, universities and colleges, service organizations, and other community partners. Leaders in the educational system must share responsibility for decision making with these groups. Learn more about the goals and key components of the OLS at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/leadership/actionplan.html>.

### *School leadership*

Leadership is second only to teaching in its impact on student outcomes. School leaders must have a consistent and continuous school-wide focus on student achievement within a culture of high expectations. This culture is guided by the fundamental principle that every child can learn and by a commitment to reach every student.

Leadership is defined within the OLF as the exercise of influence on organizational members and other stakeholders towards the identification and achievement of the organization's vision and goals. Leadership is successful when it makes significant and positive contributions to the progress of the organization, and is ethical (supportive and facilitative rather than persuasive, manipulative, or coercive).

### *Student leadership*

The important role that student leaders play in influencing their peers and the school culture must also be acknowledged, and their efforts encouraged. Where students are active participants and fully engaged in their education, student achievement improves.

### **Making connections**

To demonstrate shared and committed leadership and in support of the strategy, a board is expected to identify a contact person to liaise with the ministry and other boards to share challenges, promising practices, and resources. Each board has identified a contact person.

*The York Catholic District School Board asks for one staff member at each school to volunteer as an Equity/First Nation, Métis, and Inuit representative. This person works with the principal, other staff, and the school community to address equity issues and coordinate activities to mark important cultural days or events, including Black History Month, Stand Up Against Poverty Day, and World HIV/AIDS Day, as well as assist at the school level in the implementation of the Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) Education Policy Framework.*

*Student Voice is about Ontario's students taking control of their learning by becoming engaged. It's about connecting what's happening in the classroom to real-life experience out of school and giving students ways to help achieve their goals. SpeakUp projects are helping students and student councils get more engaged in learning and their school community. The Student Voice webpage is located at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/students/speakup/index.html>.*

### **3. School–community relationships**

## ACTION ITEMS

#### **Boards will:**

- review existing community partnerships to support the principles of equity and inclusive education and to reflect the diversity of the broader community;
- 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 better board-level representation and greater access to board initiatives.

#### **Schools will:**

- implement strategies to review existing community partnerships so that they reflect the diversity of the broader community;
- work towards representation of diverse groups on school committees.

### *Building capacity*

Schools and boards need to build their capacity to serve increasingly diverse communities. A board can help to ensure that all perspectives are represented by encouraging community involvement and participation in the development, implementation, and monitoring of school board policies and programs. Such an approach fosters school–community relationships that are based on trust and mutual respect.

A board should continue to work with educators, support staff, employers, the community, parents, and students to build on success and increase system capacity through a whole-school approach. It should, for example, continue to develop partnerships between schools and employers to provide more cooperative education placements and other forms of experiential learning and program pathways for students. It should also continue to strengthen partnerships with child care operators and family support programs that are located in or close to schools. The whole-school community, in keeping with its collaborative culture, has a collective responsibility to find ways to keep all members of the community working together towards improved educational outcomes and successful participation in society for all students.

### *Partnerships and outreach*

School boards should maintain existing relationships and partnerships that support constructive and open dialogue with parents, community groups, and partners. They should also analyse their current outreach efforts so that all community groups have access to and can participate in school–community partnerships. Expanded outreach is particularly important to the further development and implementation of an equity and inclusive education policy, where the support of the entire, diverse school community is essential.

*The School and Community Engaged Education Project, administered by the York Centre for Education and Community, was a three-year partnership between the York University Faculty of Education and the Toronto District School Board. It was designed to improve the participation and performance of students by focusing on their particular needs, concerns, interests, and aspirations. Launched in the fall of 2008, the project was carried out in several schools and includes research to identify and assess current educational activities, professional development for teachers, mentoring and achievement counselling for students, and measures designed to engage parents and community members.*



*Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board provides Grade 7 and 8 students with an opportunity to experience Aboriginal arts through story telling, music, visual arts, interpretive movement, and drama. The program concludes with a symposium where students share stories, art, and dance created during the program. Aboriginal artists and community elders participate in the development and delivery of the program. Secondary school students, provided with a similar opportunity, produced a short film called "Rose Red, a fairy tale turned upside down and told with Aboriginal flair".*

*The Toronto Catholic District School Board, in partnership with the Kababayan Community Centre, runs an after-school program at a secondary school for Grade 8, 9, and 10 students who have recently arrived from the Philippines. The program runs from October to June. Students are mentored on various topics, including adjusting to life in Canada and leadership skills, and are able to participate in social activities such as group skating, summer camp, and field trips.*

#### **4. Inclusive curriculum and assessment practices**

## ACTION ITEMS

### **Boards will:**

- review student assessment, evaluation, and reporting policies and practices to identify and address systemic bias that may exist in the way students' work is assessed, evaluated, and reported;
- support the schools' review of classroom strategies that promote school-wide equity and inclusive education policies and practices.

### **Schools will:**

- 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.

### **Curriculum policy**

The ministry's curriculum policy supports respect for and acceptance of diversity in Ontario's schools. Through the curriculum review process, curriculum is continuously revised to maintain and increase its relevance to the changing needs and lives of

students. Revised curriculum policy documents include sections on antidiscrimination and equity and inclusive education and their relevance to the particular subject or discipline. Diversity connections, including First Nation, Métis, and Inuit perspectives, are incorporated in the curriculum expectations, examples, and teacher prompts. The principles of equity and inclusive education are highlighted in the introductory sections of all curriculum documents and are embedded throughout the grades or courses. All curriculum documents are checked by academic experts to ensure that they reflect principles of equity and inclusive education.

### *Learning opportunities and resources*

Schools are expected to give students and staff authentic and relevant opportunities to learn about diverse histories, cultures, and perspectives. Lessons, projects, and related resources should allow students to see themselves reflected in the curriculum (e.g., providing information about women’s contributions to science and technology, about Black inventors, about Aboriginal beliefs and practices related to the environment; using texts written by gay/lesbian authors). Students need to feel engaged in and empowered by what they are learning, supported by the teachers and staff from whom they are learning, and welcomed in the environment in which they are learning.

### *Instructional practices*

Schools are expected to support effective instructional practices that reflect the diverse needs and pathways of all students. Currently, there are excellent examples of practices that consider the diverse needs of individual learners. Differentiated instruction takes into account the backgrounds and experiences of students in order to provide content that is relevant to them and approaches that are suited to their individual interests, aptitudes, and learning needs.

### *Closing the achievement gap*

Research shows that advanced literacy and numeracy knowledge and skills are the keys to successful lives for students (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 6). Ontario’s literacy and numeracy strategy supports all students, from Kindergarten to Grade 12, in attaining the highest possible achievement in both literacy and numeracy, through the implementation of *evidence-based instructional and assessment practices across all subjects*. The Ontario Early Years Policy Framework and the full-day kindergarten program are responsive to research that demonstrates that positive early years experiences lead to improved determinants of health, resulting in better economic and health outcomes throughout life. By adopting such practices, teachers across Ontario help close the achievement gap by giving all students the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

The Student Success strategy promotes programs at the secondary level that are designed to engage students by meeting their diverse needs and interests. By helping

more students succeed, these programs contribute to closing the achievement gap. For example, the Specialist High Skills Major enables students to gain sector-specific skills and knowledge in the context of engaging, career-related learning environments, and helps them focus on graduation and on pursuing their postsecondary goals. Students who are experiencing success in programs that recognize their strengths and interests remain active, engaged learners.

### ***Assessment, evaluation, and reporting***

In order to identify and address any discriminatory biases that prevent students from fulfilling their learning potential, schools need to review their assessment, evaluation, and reporting practices, which must adhere to the fundamental principles set out in the policy document *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools, 2010*. In order to support valid and reliable assessment, evaluation, and reporting that will lead to the improvement of learning for all students, teachers must use assessment and evaluation strategies and related practices and procedures that:

- are fair, transparent, and equitable for all students;
- support all students, including those with special education needs, those who are learning the language of instruction (English or French), and those who are First Nation, Métis, or Inuit;
- are carefully planned to relate to the curriculum expectations and learning goals and, as much as possible, to the interests, learning styles and preferences, needs, and experiences of all students;
- are communicated clearly to students and parents at the beginning of the school year or course and at other appropriate points throughout the school year or course;
- are ongoing, varied in nature, and administered over a period of time to provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate the full range of their learning;
- provide ongoing descriptive feedback that is clear, specific, meaningful, and timely to support improved learning and achievement;
- develop students' self-assessment skills to enable them to assess their own learning, set specific goals, and plan next steps for their learning.

### ***Communication***

A board is expected to inform parents and students about the board's assessment and evaluation policies and practices. Information about the learning expectations and the student's academic progress should be communicated to the student and parents on an ongoing basis. Parents should feel that their active participation in discussions regarding assessment and placement decisions is welcomed, and the student should have equitable access to available program options. A board is expected to make efforts to assist parents whose first language is not the language of the board.

*The Conseil scolaire catholique de district des Grandes Rivières offers a program to Grade 6 students and their teachers in which Métis Elders host dynamic workshops on Métis culture, knowledge, and perspectives. The program seeks to strengthen students' sense of identity and belonging, promote the development of literacy skills, and provide resource enrichment in reading and social studies. It has been supported by community partnerships with Métis organizations.*

*The ministry document English Language Learners/ESL and ELD Programs and Services: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12 (2007) sets out policies and procedures for the development and implementation of programs and supports for English language learners in English elementary and secondary schools.*

*The Aboriginal Education Office's "Teachers' Toolkit" is a resource that provides various teaching strategies for educators to plan instruction that highlights Aboriginal perspectives in the curriculum for Grades 1 to 12. It includes background information for each topic, references to resources, and ways to engage communities and parents.*

*In 2009, Grade 5 students at the Peel District School Board's Corsair Public School learned about ableism through song writing, drama, visual art, and social studies. The class wrote a song with musician Greg Lawless called "We're All Able." The lyrics are as follows:*

We're all able. We're all able.  
To think, to feel, to love.  
We're all able.

In my mind, I have a dream.  
That we're all playing on the same team.  
We all deserve, deserve a try.  
And this my friend, you can't deny.

We should be loved for who we are.  
'Cuz deep inside we're all a star.  
And we all have the ability.  
To be the best that we can be.

*(continued)*

I will pick you up.  
When you fall down.  
I will turn your frown.  
Right upside down.

*Chorus*

So, help me live my destiny.  
And help me find the best in me.  
To show how great that I can be.  
From east to west, from you to me.

*Two boys in the class, Davyd and Arjun, also drew a picture of two men playing wheelchair basketball, with a caption that reads, "Wheelchair basketball is based on the actual game: basketball."*

*The athlete's wheelchair is faster and safer. And the game is for all athletes. So if things don't work out one way, try it another way!"*



## 5. Religious accommodation

### ACTION ITEMS

#### Boards will:

- review and revise existing religious accommodation guidelines and communicate these guidelines to the school community.

#### *Board policy*

Religious accommodation provisions are designed to promote a respectful learning environment for all. Accordingly, a board is expected to take appropriate steps to provide religious accommodation for students and employees. As part of its equity and inclusive education policy and implementation plan, a board has a religious accommodation guideline in keeping with PPM No. 119, “Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools” (April 22, 2013), and the provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code. The Code prohibits discrimination on the grounds of creed and imposes a duty to accommodate (see Ontario Human Rights Commission, *Policy on Creed and the Accommodation of Religious Observances*, 2009). Boards should also adhere to the requirements set out in PPM No. 108, “Opening or Closing Exercises in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools”, and R.R.O. 1990, Regulation 298, “Operation of Schools – General” s. 27–29, “Religion in Schools”.

#### *Effective practice*

A school board is expected to provide religious accommodation for students and employees who want to practise a faith. The Ontario Human Rights Commission interprets “creed” broadly as “religious creed” or “religion” and defines it as “a professed system and confession of faith, including both beliefs and observances or worship” (OHRC, 2009, p. 4). The commission limits the definition of creed, excluding “secular, moral or ethical beliefs or political convictions” and religions that “incite hatred or violence against other individuals or groups” or that “contravene international human rights standards or criminal law” (p. 5). Individuals who do not belong to a religion or practise any specific faith are also protected by the Code. Therefore, a board has to facilitate the practice of religious observances and allow its employees and students freedom to practise their religion.

Examples of religious accommodation include the following: granting a leave for a staff member for a religious observance (e.g., Diwali, Eid, Yom Kippur); modifying a student’s responsibilities in an examination schedule or on a field trip; and permitting religious attire such as a turban, the hijab, or a ceremonial kirpan.

For guidance in reviewing, revising, or refining its religious accommodation guidelines, a board may refer to the sample template at <http://oesc-cseo.org/English/EquityInclusivity.html>.

Examples of steps that boards have taken to provide religious accommodation are included in the boxes below.

*The Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario believes that recognition of diverse Canadian traditions encourages the creation of a dynamic and inclusive school community. Recognition of and respect for the diverse religions and cultures within the board through an interfaith calendar support the board and schools in making decisions on religious accommodation and increase the participation of students and parents in school activities.*

*The Toronto Catholic District School Board has taken steps to accept and respect students with different religious views. This includes, for example, allowances for Muslim secondary students to use school space for prayer and to wear head coverings or religious symbols as part of their school uniform. As well, the secondary school curriculum in the areas in which students are often physically active, such as health and physical education, may be modified for students who are fasting during holy days. These practices are in keeping with Catholic Gospel Values and the board's Equity Policy.*

## 6. School climate and the prevention of discrimination and harassment

### ACTION ITEMS

#### **Boards will:**

- 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 better board-level representation and greater access to board initiatives;
- put procedures in place that will enable students and staff to report incidents of bullying, discrimination, and harassment safely, and that will also enable the board to respond in a timely manner.

#### **School climate**

The school climate may be defined as the learning environment and relationships found within a school and school community. A positive school climate exists when

all members of the school community feel safe, included, and accepted, and actively promote and support positive behaviours and interactions. When principles of equity and inclusive education are embedded in the learning environment, they support a positive school climate and a culture of mutual respect.

### *Board policy*

Board policies are expected to foster a positive school climate that is free from racism, bullying, and discriminatory or harassing behaviour. A Safe Schools Action Team report notes that “among the many factors that influence the quality of student learning and achievement, a safe and supportive environment for learning and working is one of the most important” (Safe Schools Action Team, 2008, p. 1). The principles of equity and inclusive education support positive student behaviour. These principles must also be applied in progressive discipline, particularly when it is necessary to take into account mitigating and other factors in individual cases. Furthermore, for students with special education needs, all interventions, consequences, and supports must take into account the student’s exceptionality and his or her Individual Education Plan (IEP).

### *Monitoring of school climate*

Regular monitoring of school climate is essential. The Accepting Schools Act requires boards to collect information by conducting school climate surveys with staff, students, and parents at least once every two years. Monitoring through school climate surveys, as outlined in PPM No. 144, “Bullying Prevention and Intervention”, can help identify inappropriate behaviours, issues, or barriers – overt or subtle, intentional or unintentional – that should be addressed. A board is expected to include in its school climate survey questions on bullying/harassment related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expressions as well as questions on sexual harassment. Boards are also expected to incorporate questions on equity and inclusive education. Consideration may be given to extend the climate surveys to staff and parents associated with on-site child care and family support programs in order to capture a more holistic picture of the learning environment. More information on school climate is available at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/climate.html>. A board is also expected to put procedures in place that will enable school staff to report all serious student incidents, including those that are motivated by hate, bias, or prejudice, and that will enable the board to respond in a timely manner. Everyone, including students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community partners, has an important role to play in creating a positive school climate and preventing and addressing inappropriate behaviour such as bullying. It is important for the whole-school community to work together to create a safe, inclusive, and accepting school climate.

### *Effective school practice*

A variety of student-led activities, teams, or clubs, such as Gay/Straight Alliances and Students and Teachers Against Racism, promote and encourage the understanding and development of healthy relationships. In accordance with the Accepting Schools Act, which amended the Education Act, all schools and boards must support students who wish to establish and lead activities and organizations that promote a safe and inclusive



learning environment, acceptance of and respect for others, and the creation of a positive school climate. Co-curricular activities that offer students opportunities to achieve success outside the classroom can contribute to their engagement in learning and success inside the classroom, as well as with before- and after-school licensed child care and/or programs (e.g., those focused on sport, recreation, the arts, and culture).

*The Toronto District School Board offers the Triangle Program to students in Grades 9 to 12. The Triangle Program is a high school program for lesbian, gay, bisexual, straight, and transgender students and students who may be victims of homophobia or transphobia. The program offers both academic and applied courses that highlight queer history and contributions, as well as on-site counselling support, smaller class sizes, a nutrition program, and volunteer and co-op placements for students (see [www.triangleprogram.ca](http://www.triangleprogram.ca)). The board also operates the Gender-based Violence Prevention office, a K–12 multidisciplinary team, district-wide policy implementation and programming that covers all aspects of gender-related violence, from common issues of homophobia and sexual harassment in hallways to serious incidents of dating violence.*

## 7. Professional learning

### ACTION ITEMS

#### **Boards will:**

- support the schools' review of classroom strategies that promote school-wide equity and inclusive education policies and practices;
- provide opportunities for school and system leaders, students, administrators, teachers, support staff, and trustees to participate in equity and inclusive education, professional learning, and leadership initiatives.

#### **Schools will:**

- 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.

### *Building capacity*

Boards need to build capacity among staff for understanding and addressing issues that pertain to equity, diversity, and inclusive education, through collaborative learning communities and professional learning opportunities at all levels. Doing so will help to create an inclusive, respectful, fair, and discrimination-free school system by changing individual and collective behaviour and organizational and institutional practices to support student achievement and help close achievement gaps.

### *Professional learning activities*

Professional learning activities must be ongoing and based on evidence of positive results. A board is expected to provide opportunities for teachers, including guidance counsellors, and support staff, administrators, and trustees to participate in professional learning and training on topics such as antiracism, antidiscrimination, and gender-based violence, and to provide information for students and parents to increase their knowledge and understanding of equity and inclusive education. A board is also expected to provide sensitivity training in the areas of gender and sexual orientation, as well as professional learning in effective early intervention and prevention strategies and practices to deal with incidents related to racism, gender-based violence, homophobia, sexual harassment, and inappropriate sexual behaviour. School boards are also required to establish and provide annual professional development programs to educate teachers and other staff of the board about bullying prevention and strategies for promoting a positive school climate.

### *Building awareness*

An improved awareness of the negative impact on students' lives of discriminatory behaviour and attitudes, including racism, Islamophobia, antisemitism, and homophobia, can help education leaders, trustees, and staff change individual behaviour and institutional practices to eliminate systemic barriers. A board is encouraged to draw upon existing expertise within its own organization, other boards, and community agencies and groups. Effective, systemic change can only be achieved by the collective action of all those involved in the school system. A whole-school approach fosters and supports a positive school climate and culture.

*The Greater Essex County District School Board has developed a comprehensive diversity training program called "Diversity Matters: An Educator's Guide to Respecting Diversity in the Classroom" as part of its New Teacher Induction Program. This mandatory workshop consists of modules designed to help teachers meaningfully address the changing needs of Ontario's increasingly diverse classrooms.*

*The Ontario Secondary Schools Teachers' Federation conducts half- or full-day workshops on gender-based violence and homophobia. The workshop, called "From PAIN to PRIDE", provides teachers with definitions, resources, and strategies to help them address equity issues faced by their students. Teachers learn about the different components of gender-based violence and the negative impact of having only traditional gender identities accepted and reinforced in schools and at home. In addition, the workshop provides a four-stage approach to handling harassment in school hallways that includes stopping the harassment, identifying the issue, broadening the response, and asking for change in future behaviour.*

## 8. Accountability and transparency

### ACTION ITEMS

#### **Boards will:**

- post the annual report by the Director of Education on its website, which will inform the ministry and the local community about the progress the board has made in meeting its strategic goals in the previous school year;
- provide information about equity and inclusive education policies, procedures, and practices to students, administrators, teachers, parents, school staff, school councils, and volunteers, and make efforts to assist parents whose first language is not the language of the board;
- establish processes that include performance indicators to monitor progress and assess the effectiveness of policies, programs, and procedures.
- develop board improvement plans that are aligned with Ontario's equity and inclusive education strategy.

#### **Schools will:**

- report progress annually to the school board;
- develop school improvement plans that are aligned with Ontario's equity and inclusive education strategy;
- review and establish self-assessment processes to determine the effectiveness of the school's equity and inclusive education plans and procedures.

### *Supporting student achievement and well-being*

The whole-school community has a collective responsibility to foster student achievement, well-being, and success. School leaders facilitate this process by listening to and acting upon community feedback and by engaging others to work in the best interests of all students.

### *School improvement planning*

Board and school leaders and staff teams should collaborate in a school improvement process that uses comprehensive, valid, and reliable data to help identify the root causes of barriers to student achievement and well-being, to sharpen awareness of all of the different grounds of discrimination that exist, to encourage courageous conversations about racism and equity issues, and to find ways to address the identified barriers.

### *Monitoring progress*

A board must continuously assess and monitor their progress in reviewing their policies, programs, guidelines, and practices and in implementing an equity and inclusive education policy. Equity and inclusive education principles are to be embedded in

the goals of the board's multi-year strategic plan. Board and school improvement plans, within the context of the board's multi-year strategic plan, are to be developed using an equity and inclusive education focus.

### **Accountability**

A board must have appropriate mechanisms in place to help provide accountability and transparency in reporting progress to the ministry and the community. Board and school improvement plans, within the context of a board's strategic multi-year plan, will take into consideration the board's equity and inclusive education policy. The plans should focus on identifying and removing any barriers to student learning in order to reduce gaps in achievement and provide a respectful and responsive school climate.

Each board will post the Director of Education's annual report on its website. The report will inform the ministry and the local community about the progress the board has made in meeting its strategic objectives in the previous school year and the action the board is taking in those strategic priority areas where goals are not being met.

The annual report should also outline progress, arising from the cyclical review of board policies and practices, towards embedding the principles of equity and inclusive education in all aspects of board operations. The report should give details of the steps taken to improve student achievement and reduce achievement gaps, and the results obtained.

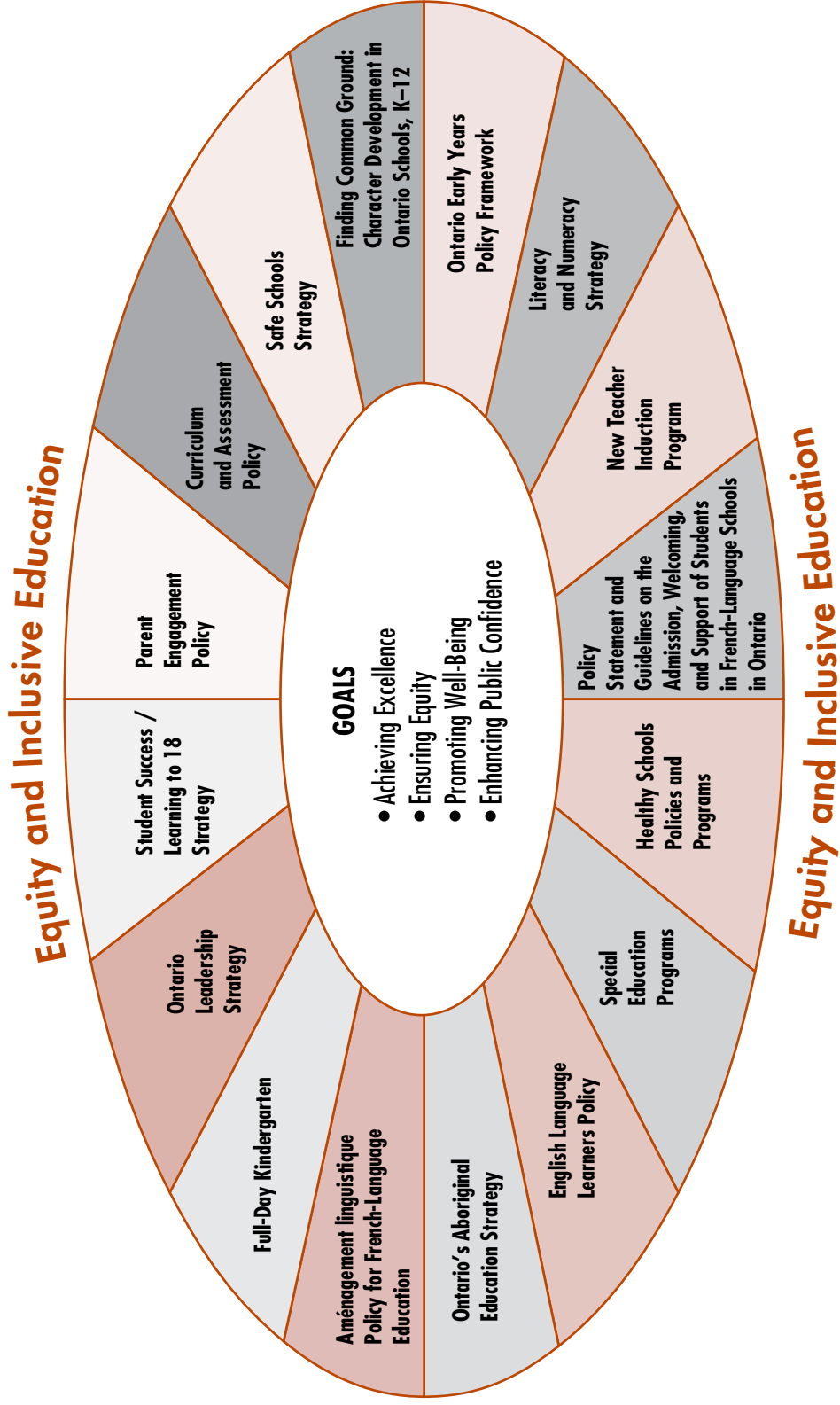
*The Halton District School Board requires every school to have an Equity Contact Teacher and a Student Safety and Well-being Team. The team provides workshops to assist the school in setting its safe, equitable, and inclusive schools goals for the year. Schools are encouraged to use the Tell Them from Me Survey data in the "I feel safe, I feel I belong" domains. To help monitor and determine progress, schools are encouraged to collect "before and after" data on such topics as improved student achievement, reduced rates of absenteeism, and increased student participation in the school.*

### **Communication**

Boards must also inform the community about these efforts and their outcome. Ongoing and open communication to keep all stakeholders informed of the board's goals and progress is essential to increase transparency and public confidence in the board and its schools.

### Key Connections to Ministry Programs and Initiatives

This diagram illustrates that equity and inclusive education principles are connected and relevant to other ministry programs and initiatives in achieving the ministry's four goals.





## IMPLEMENTATION

### *Equity and inclusive education policy*

The ministry requires each board to have in place an equity and inclusive education policy that addresses the eight areas of focus, a guideline on religious accommodation, and an implementation plan.

### *Policy review*

During its cyclical review process, a board is expected to take steps to align all its other policies and procedures (e.g., on safe schools, student discipline, staff hiring) with its equity and inclusive education policy. This process will help the board to embed the principles of equity and inclusive education in all aspects of board and school operations and learning environments.

### *Continuous improvement*

The ministry expects all boards and schools to continue their progress in meeting the needs of a diverse student population. Indicators should be in place to measure and evaluate progress. The ministry expects a board to demonstrate continuous improvement such that, wherever a board starts, progress is evident on an annual basis towards the goal of embedding the equity and inclusive education policy in the operations of the board.

### *Implementation plans*

Implementation plans need to be aligned with the strategy and with PPM No. 119 (April 22, 2013) and should be developed in consultation with the full range of education and community stakeholders, including parents, staff, and students. A board may establish a committee, or may use an existing equity committee, that is representative of the community to assist in further policy development and implementation.

### *Scope of implementation planning*

The implementation plan should include:

- ongoing policy review, revision, and refinement;
- the board’s vision and mission statements;
- clearly stated annual goals and measurable outcomes at both the system and school levels;
- procedures and indicators for annually measuring and evaluating progress;
- a description of active and ongoing partnerships;
- embedding the principles of equity and inclusive education in all aspects of board and school operations and learning environments.

### *Considerations at the system level*

At the system level, all board improvement plan goals should be viewed through an equity and inclusive education lens. A board’s multi-year strategic plan will take into consideration the board’s equity and inclusive education policy. Boards are expected to use the cyclical review process to embed the principles of equity and inclusive education in all aspects of their operations and learning environments in order to enhance support for student achievement and well-being, and help close achievement gaps.

The Education Act, as amended by the Accepting Schools Act, requires that school boards include “promoting a positive school climate” and “promoting the prevention of bullying” as goals in their multi-year strategic plans. As such, boards are required to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of board policies aimed at achieving these goals, review the multi-year strategic plan annually, and make the plan available to supporters and employees of the board.

### *Considerations at the school level*

At the school level, the school improvement plan should align with the board improvement plan. Progress towards meeting school improvement goals should be reported annually to the board and to the school community.

### *Making connections*

A board is expected to identify an equity and inclusive education contact to liaise with the ministry and with other boards to share challenges, promising practices, and resources. All boards have identified an equity and inclusive education contact.

Eight “Sample Work Plan” templates follow, one for each area of focus. These may assist a board in reviewing, revising, or refining its implementation plan. Each template includes the appropriate action items from the strategy.

## Sample Work Plan – Areas of Focus

### 1. Board policies, programs, guidelines, and practices

*Mission Statement:* The board is committed to serving students 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.

Action Item	SMART Goal	Indicators	Measures	Targets	Responsibility	Timelines
<b>The board will:</b>						
<b>1.1</b> review and revise existing equity and inclusive education policies;						
<b>1.2</b> implement equity and inclusive education policies;						
<b>1.3</b> embed equity and inclusive education principles in board and school improvement plans;						
<b>1.4</b> implement positive employment practices that support equitable hiring, mentoring, retention, promotion, and succession planning.						
<b>Schools will:</b>						
<b>1.5</b> develop and implement strategies to engage students, parents, and the broader community actively in the review, development, and implementation of initiatives to support and promote equity and inclusive education;						
<b>1.6</b> implement board equity and inclusive education policies, programs, and action plans that reflect the needs of their diverse school communities.						



## 2. Shared and committed leadership

*Mission Statement:* The board and schools are committed to providing effective leadership to improve student achievement and to close achievement gaps for students by identifying, addressing, and removing all forms of discrimination.

Action Item	SMART Goal	Indicators	Measures	Targets	Responsibility	Timelines
<p><b>The board will:</b></p> <p><b>2.1</b>            identify a contact person to liaise with the ministry and other boards to share challenges, promising practices, and resources;</p>						
<p><b>2.2</b>            provide opportunities for students, school and system leaders, administrators, teachers, support staff, and trustees to participate in equity and inclusive education professional learning and leadership initiatives.</p>						

### 3. School–community relationships

*Mission Statement:* The board and schools are committed to establishing and maintaining partnerships with diverse communities so that the perspectives and experiences of all students are recognized and their needs are met.

Action Item	SMART Goal	Indicators	Measures	Targets	Responsibility	Timelines
<p><b>The board will:</b></p> <p><b>3.1</b> review existing community partnerships so that they support the principles of equity and inclusive education and reflect the diversity of the broader community;</p>						
<p><b>3.2</b> 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 better board-level representation and greater access to board initiatives.</p>						
<p><b>Schools will:</b></p> <p><b>3.3</b> implement strategies to review existing community partnerships so that they reflect the diversity of the broader community;</p>						
<p><b>3.4</b> work towards representation of diverse groups on school committees.</p>						

#### 4. Inclusive curriculum and assessment practices

*Mission Statement:* The board and schools are committed to implementing an inclusive curriculum and to reviewing resources, instruction, and assessment and evaluation practices in order to identify and address discriminatory biases and maximize students' learning potential.

Action Item	SMART Goal	Indicators	Measures	Targets	Responsibility	Timelines
<p><b>The board will:</b></p> <p><b>4.1</b> review student assessment, evaluation, and reporting policies and practices to identify and address systemic bias that may exist in the way students' work is assessed, evaluated, and reported;</p>						
<p><b>4.2</b> support the schools' review of classroom strategies that promote school-wide equity and inclusive education policies and practices.</p>						
<p><b>Schools will:</b></p> <p><b>4.3</b> 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.</p>						

## 5. Religious accommodation

*Mission Statement:* The board and schools acknowledge each individual’s right to follow or not follow religious beliefs and practices free from discriminatory or harassing behaviour and are committed to adhering to the board’s religious accommodation guidelines.

Action Item	SMART Goal	Indicators	Measures	Targets	Responsibility	Timelines
<p><b>The board will:</b></p> <p><b>5.1</b> review and revise existing religious accommodation guidelines, and communicate these guidelines to the school community.</p>						

Note: The “Sample Template: Religious Accommodation Guideline” is available at <http://oesc-cseo.org/English/EquityInclusivity.html>.

## 6. School climate and the prevention of discrimination and harassment

*Mission Statement:* The board and schools are committed 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 Item	SMART Goal	Indicators	Measures	Targets	Responsibility	Timelines
<p><b>The board will:</b></p> <p><b>6.1</b> 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 better board-level representation and greater access to board initiatives;</p>						
<p><b>6.2</b> put procedures in place that will enable students and staff to report incidents of bullying, discrimination, and harassment safely and that will also enable boards to respond in a timely manner.</p>						

## 7. Professional learning

*Mission Statement:* The board and schools are committed to providing the school community, including students, with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours needed to identify and eliminate discriminatory biases and systemic barriers.

Action Item	SMART Goal	Indicators	Measures	Targets	Responsibility	Timelines
<p><b>The board will:</b></p> <p><b>7.1</b> support the schools' review of classroom strategies that promote school-wide equity and inclusive education policies and practices;</p>						
<p><b>7.2</b> provide opportunities for school and system leaders, students, administrators, teachers, support staff, and trustees to participate in equity and inclusive education professional learning and leadership initiatives.</p>						
<p><b>Schools will:</b></p> <p><b>7.3</b> review classroom strategies and revise themes needed to help ensure that they are aligned with and reflect school-wide equity and inclusive education policies.</p>						

*Note:* All trustees, school and system leaders, administrators, teachers, including guidance counsellors and support staff, need specific training and professional learning on antiracism and antidiscrimination.

### 8. Accountability and transparency

*Mission Statement:* The board and schools are committed to assessing and monitoring their progress in implementing an equity and inclusive education policy; to embedding the principles in all board/school policies, programs, guidelines, and practices; and to communicating these results to the community.

Action Item	SMART Goal	Indicators	Measures	Targets	Responsibility	Timelines
<p><b>The board will:</b></p> <p><b>8.1</b> post the annual report by the Director of Education on its website, which will inform the ministry and the local community about the progress the board has made in meeting its strategic goals in the previous school year;</p>						
<p><b>8.2</b> provide information about equity and inclusive education policies, procedures, and practices to students, administrators, teachers, parents, school staff, school councils, and volunteers, and make efforts to assist parents whose first language is not the language of the board;</p>						
<p><b>8.3</b> establish processes that include performance indicators to monitor progress and assess the effectiveness of policies, programs, and procedures;</p>						
<p><b>8.4</b> develop board improvement plans that are aligned with Ontario's equity and inclusive education strategy.</p>						

Accountability and transparency (continued)

Action Item	SMART Goal	Indicators	Measures	Targets	Responsibility	Timelines
<b>Schools will:</b> <b>8.5</b> report progress annually to the school board;						
<b>8.6</b> develop school improvement plans that are aligned with Ontario's equity and inclusive education strategy;						
<b>8.7</b> review and establish self-assessment processes to determine the effectiveness of the school's equity and inclusive education plans and procedures.						



## Implementation Plan Reflection Tool

Questions	Yes	No	In process
1. Does the implementation plan have clear goals and timelines?			
2. Is the implementation plan aligned with the principles and provisions of the equity and inclusive education strategy and PPM No. 119?			
3. Does the implementation plan clearly address all eight areas of focus in PPM No. 119?			
4. Is there a procedure to enable diverse communities to provide input into the review, revision, and refinement of the implementation plan?			
5. Does the implementation plan include provisions to embed the principles of equity and inclusive education in all board policies, programs, and operations as part of the board's cyclical review process?			
6. Are there procedures to ensure that equity and inclusive education goals are included in board and school improvement plans?			
7. Is a procedure for an annual review included in the implementation plan?			
8. How does the board assess and monitor implementation of its equity and inclusive education policy?			
9. Is there a procedure to communicate the implementation plan and ongoing progress in carrying it out to the school board and community?			
10. Is the board's implementation plan aligned and embedded within the strategic goals of the board's multi-year strategic plan?			
11. Is the annual report by the Director of Education about the progress the board has made in meeting its strategic goals posted on the board's website?			

For a more in-depth reflective tool on the eight areas of focus, please refer to “How Do We Know We Are Making a Difference? A Reflective Tool for School and System Leaders on the Implementation of Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy” (available at [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/equity.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/equity.html)).



## MONITORING AND REPORTING

### *Purpose of monitoring and reporting*

The purpose of monitoring is to determine that a board is working towards meeting ministry requirements and goals as set out in the strategy and PPM No. 119 (2013) and to measure a board's progress in implementing equity and inclusive education principles to reduce achievement gaps for all students.

Reporting is intended to demonstrate in a transparent manner that a board is making ongoing progress towards meeting ministry requirements and goals, as set out in the strategy and PPM No. 119, and to inform stakeholders about progress made towards supporting student achievement and well-being and reducing achievement gaps for all students through implementing equity and inclusive education principles.

### *Reporting on progress*

Each board will post the annual report by the Director of Education on its website, which will inform the ministry and the local community about the progress the board has made in meeting its strategic goals in the previous school year and the action the board is taking in those strategic priority areas where goals are not being met.

### *Collecting and analysing data*

Data can be words, numbers, or observations that are collected systematically, usually for a specific purpose. Some boards and schools already collect the following types of data:

- *demographic* – contextual data that relate to equity and inclusive education (e.g., students' ethnicity and/or gender; community socio-economic factors that may be taken into consideration when planning for improved student achievement; enrolment, attendance, and graduation data);
- *perceptual* – students', teachers', and parents' perceptions of the learning environment, values and beliefs, attitudes, observations;

- *student learning* – student achievement data (e.g., teacher observations; samples of students’ classroom work; results of informal and formal assessments; report cards or large-scale assessment results);
- *school processes* – school programs and processes to inform student achievement.

### ***Evidence-informed decision making***

Boards and schools have already moved towards a culture of evidence-informed decision making. The ministry has taken significant steps to improve the use and reporting of data through the Managing Information for Student Achievement (MISA) initiative. For example, the Ontario School Information System (OnSIS) enables the tracking, over time, of accurate and complete student data needed to examine trends and patterns related to student progress and to produce cohort indicators (e.g., graduation rates, credit accumulation). MISA Professional Network Centres (PNCs) operate as learning communities across the province, providing connections to the research sector and promoting the sharing of information and effective practices across the education sector.

### ***Effective practice***

Boards and schools regularly use research and performance indicators to measure progress and to guide programming in support of continuous improvement. Student Success, for example, uses indicators to monitor credit accumulation, students at risk, rates of students leaving French-language schools, fulfilment of the secondary school literacy requirement for graduation, enrolment and mark distribution in particular courses, and achievement gaps in pass rates among academic, applied, and locally developed compulsory courses.

Boards are expected to use research data to identify practices that will support student achievement and close achievement gaps. A common characteristic of high-performing schools is their practice of translating the planned collection and use of data into priorities, goals, and strategies linked to school improvement planning. Boards are encouraged to use SMART (Strategic and Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-based, Time-bound) goals and short- and long-term strategies to help develop, implement, and monitor effective instructional plans. The school improvement planning cycle is the vehicle for translating collected data into constructive change in classrooms and the school.

### ***Guidelines for collecting data***

When collecting data, boards and schools must adhere to the provisions of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) (and provincial schools, to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act [FIPPA]) and the Education Act and regulations made under the act. MFIPPA establishes the way in which school boards must protect an individual’s right to privacy

when collecting, retaining, using, disclosing, and disposing of personal information, and FIPPA does the same with respect to information held by the provincial government. These acts also establish the right of individuals to request access to information held by school boards and governments. Boards should consult with their legal counsel and freedom of information coordinators to ensure that they are fulfilling all their legal responsibilities. Furthermore, when developing their policies, boards must respect all applicable collective agreements.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission's *Guidelines for Collecting Data on Enumerated Grounds Under the Code* explains when it is permissible to collect and analyse data based on “enumerated grounds”, such as race, disability, or sex. The guidelines state that:

A data collection program should clearly set out a purpose that is consistent with the Code. A data collection program can be contextualized within an organization's obligation to take into account a person's already disadvantaged position within Canadian society. ...

Regardless of the data collection method used, the people data is being collected on and the broader public in general should be advised of why such information is being gathered and its potential uses. They should also be told how the data will be collected, the steps taken or that will be taken to protect privacy and confidentiality, the benefits of collecting data, and the progress reached in achieving stated goals and objectives. (p. 4)

A board that currently collects or is planning to collect data based on the enumerated grounds should adhere to the OHRC guidelines. Several boards are currently collecting student self-identification data. For additional information on collecting data, boards should refer to the resource *Count Me In! Collecting Human Rights–Based Data*, available at <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/count-me-collecting-human-rights-based-data>.

The resource document *Building Bridges to Success for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Students, 2007* has been designed to help Ontario school boards develop effective policies and practices for voluntary, confidential Aboriginal student self-identification.

### **Communication**

Effectively communicating how data will be used is essential. A board should make clear that the data it collects will be used only for the purposes of improving student achievement, closing achievement gaps, and increasing student well-being.

Each board needs to determine what data will be collected, how the data will be used, and with whom and in what manner the data will be shared. It will need to clearly communicate this information to its school communities, especially to parents.

### ***Guidelines for reporting progress***

Each board shall establish clear procedures and processes to assess progress towards the goals identified in its equity and inclusive education implementation plan and post its findings to board staff and members of the community. For example, each board needs to develop a process to determine that board and school improvement plans incorporate equity and inclusive education goals.

### **Sample Indicators**

In the following pages, some sample indicators of progress related to the eight areas of focus are outlined. Boards and schools are required to conduct anonymous school climate surveys of students, staff, and parents at least once every two years. Boards may use the ministry's Online School Climate Survey Tool, available in French and English and in multiple languages in the parent version, at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/climate.html>. As well, both the *School Effectiveness Framework, K–12*, available at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/framework.html>, and the Safe and Accepting Schools Toolkit, available at [www.safeacceptingschools.ca](http://www.safeacceptingschools.ca), inform the development, revision, or refinement of indicators.

Indicators may be grouped into the following types:

- *status indicators*, which describe the board's position at the beginning of the process and provide the baseline information against which future progress can be measured;
- *facilitative indicators*, which describe the supportive context and processes already in place that can facilitate implementation, such as the level of engagement of the board, the school, and other stakeholders in the process; and
- *effective (outcome) indicators*, which measure short-term, mid-term, and long-term results.

The three types of indicators are included in the following examples. Boards may find the language, template, and/or format of these indicators useful in developing their own indicators.

## **1. Board policies, programs, guidelines, and practices**

- The board has in place an equity and inclusive education policy that it continues to review and revise as necessary.
- The principles of the equity and inclusive education policy are embedded in all revised or new board policies, programs, guidelines, operations, and practices (new and existing).
- Formal professional learning programs and follow-up supports are provided to those who regularly hire new staff to facilitate fair, equitable, and inclusive hiring processes and practices.
- Opportunities are provided for stakeholders, including students and parents, to provide input into board improvement plans.
- The board and schools have reviewed their codes of conduct to determine that they include the principles of equity and inclusive education and address, bullying, harassment, and discrimination.
- Meeting dates are scheduled to take into account faith holy days, in order to remove possible deterrents to attendance of school activities by parents and community members.

## **2. Shared and committed leadership**

- A system plan is in place to build and sustain school and system leadership capacity in the areas of equity and inclusive education.
- Formal professional learning programs and follow-up supports are provided for students, administrators, teachers (including guidance counsellors), early childhood educators, support staff, and trustees on equity and inclusive education and leadership initiatives.
- An equity and inclusive education contact person is identified to liaise with the ministry and other boards to share challenges, promising practices, and resources.
- Selection criteria for persons in positions of additional responsibility include demonstrated commitment and expertise related to equity and inclusive education principles and practices.

## **3. School-community relationships**

- The board has developed a profile of its diverse communities.
- Diverse communities are involved in partnership activities within the board.
- Processes are established to identify and address systemic barriers that may deter or prevent any community members from participating in board and school activities.
- Diverse communities are represented on existing board and school committees (e.g., Special Education Advisory Committee, Parent Involvement Committee, School Council, Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee).
- Mechanisms are in place (e.g., school climate surveys) to determine if parents/guardians and community partners feel welcome and valued in the schools and at the board offices.

#### **4. Inclusive curriculum and assessment practices**

- A board procedure is in place to assess learning materials for discriminatory bias.
- Resources and instructional strategies:
  - are in compliance with the provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code with respect to the prohibited grounds of discrimination;
  - show people of different races, sex, 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, sexes, disability, faith) in society, the community, and the school.
- Professional learning based on the belief that all students can learn is reflected in classroom teachers' and guidance counsellors' expectations of students, assessment and evaluation practices, counselling about available program options, and other counselling practices.
- A variety of assessment strategies and instruments are used to inform short- and long-term planning to reduce gaps in student achievement and improve student learning and well-being.
- Parents are actively involved in discussions regarding assessment and placement decisions, including those required by the Identification, Placement and Review Committee.

#### **5. Religious accommodation**

- A guideline is in place that outlines religious accommodations available to students and staff.
- The guideline has been developed in partnership with multiple faith communities and with individuals who do not belong to a religion or practise any specific faith.
- The provisions of the guideline are actively communicated to students, teachers, parents, school staff, school councils, and volunteers.
- Community resources are identified that can provide information to school staff about the faith needs of individuals in the school and school community.
- Professional learning is provided on the legislative and policy context of religious accommodation.

#### **6. School climate and the prevention of discrimination and harassment**

- School codes of conduct are reviewed, revised, or refined to explicitly address all forms of racism, discrimination, and harassment.
- All students, parents, and other members of the school community are welcomed and respected.
- Every student is supported and inspired to succeed in a culture of high expectations for learning.
- Schools support the development of students' character by preparing students for their role in society as engaged, productive, and responsible citizens.

- School codes of conduct reflect the needs of the diverse communities served by the board and are developed with the active involvement of students, staff, parents, and a representative cross-section of community members.
- Guidelines and procedures are reviewed or developed to address the prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Ontario Human Rights Code as they may apply to students, staff, and others in the community.
- A board procedure is in place to enable students and staff to report incidents of bullying, harassment, and discrimination safely and have confidence that they will receive a timely response.
- Information about the existing or revised procedure is communicated to all students, staff, and others in the school board.

## **7. Professional learning**

- Antiracism and antidiscrimination training is provided, including professional learning in prevention and early intervention strategies.
- Opportunities are provided for students, school and system leaders, administrators, teachers, support and board staff, and trustees to participate in equity and inclusive education professional learning and leadership initiatives.
- A board equity and inclusive education contact is identified to liaise with the ministry and other boards to share challenges, promising practices, and resources.
- The principles of equity and inclusive education are modelled and incorporated in professional learning programs.
- Students are encouraged and supported in efforts to promote social justice, equity, antiracism, and antidiscrimination in schools and classrooms.

## **8. Accountability and transparency**

- Equity and inclusive education principles are embedded in the goals of the board's multi-year strategic plan. Board and school improvement plans, within the context of a board's multi-year strategic plan, will take into consideration the board's equity and inclusive education policy.
- Promoting a positive school climate and promoting the prevention of bullying are goals in the board's multi-year strategic plan.
- The equity and inclusive education policy is actively communicated to students, teachers, parents, school staff, school councils, and volunteers.
- The board's implementation plan is regularly reviewed, and revised or refined on an as-needed basis.
- Steps are taken to increase the participation of parents/guardians, trustees, students, and the community in the review, revision, and/or refinement of the equity and inclusive education policy.
- All board staff are trained to uphold, and students and parents are informed about, the protections enshrined in the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- All incidents of bullying, discrimination, and harassment are addressed in a timely manner.
- The board equity and inclusive policy is posted on the board website.





## TOOLS AND RESOURCES

### Appendix 1

#### Sample Classroom, School, and Board Self-reflection Tools

##### A. Reflective Tool for School and System Leaders

**“How Do We Know We’re Making a Difference? A Reflective Tool for School and System Leaders on the Implementation of the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy”**

This online resource (available at [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/equity.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/equity.html)) is designed to support school and system leaders in their ongoing reflection on how they can make improvements in the implementation of Ontario’s equity and inclusive education strategy in their schools and boards

##### B. Classroom Self-reflection Tool for Teachers

Effective leadership by classroom teachers in achieving equity and inclusive education is a prerequisite for securing the best possible outcome for every student in Ontario.

In my classroom, I:

- foster a commitment to equity of outcomes and to closing achievement gaps between students;
- use inclusive and respectful language and approaches in all interactions with students and parents;
- demonstrate a belief that all students can learn and a commitment to meeting the needs of all students in diverse ways;
- provide classroom materials and activities that engage students and represent the diversity, values, backgrounds, and experiences of students;

- communicate and work effectively with a diverse range of parents;
- model the equity and inclusive education values and vision of the school;
- have worked with students to develop a process through which concerns and issues about bullying and discrimination can be identified and resolved;
- have worked with students to develop a survey to measure progress towards creating an equitable, inclusive, and accepting classroom environment;
- use “teachable moments” to address non-inclusive, disrespectful, or discriminatory classroom behaviours;
- encourage student leadership by involving students in establishing and monitoring guidelines for achieving inclusive and accepting classrooms;
- understand that equity and inclusive education principles apply to every student and not just to certain groups of students; and,
- assume responsibility for examining and taking steps to modify personal beliefs and biases that are inconsistent with equity and inclusive education principles.

### **C. School Self-reflection Tool for School Leaders**

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#### **(Sample Case Study)**

Effective leadership by schools and boards in achieving equity and inclusive education is a prerequisite for securing the best possible outcome for every student in Ontario.

Both Ontario’s equity and inclusive education strategy and its leadership strategy are founded on the government’s four goals for education: achieving excellence, ensuring equity, promoting well-being, and enhancing public confidence. The Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF) is central to both strategies, as it outlines for principals and vice-principals five domains of specific leadership practices, including examples of what these practices look like when enacted. The OLF also lists Personal Leadership Resources (PLRs), which are attributes or qualities that effective leaders draw on to successfully enact the leadership practices. The three categories of PLRs are cognitive (problem-solving expertise, and knowledge of effective school and classroom practices that directly affect student learning and systems thinking), social (perceiving emotions, managing emotions, and acting in emotionally appropriate ways), and psychological (optimism, self-efficacy, resilience, and proactivity). Systems thinking and proactivity are especially important for system leaders. The OLF is available at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/leadership/framework.html> and at <http://www.education-leadership-ontario.ca/content/framework>.

## Sample Case Study

### Equity and Inclusive Education

As staff move through a school self-assessment process, they determine the effectiveness of their strategies for meeting student learning and achievement goals, identifying discriminatory biases and systemic barriers, collecting evidence, and taking action to ensure continuous improvement. During the process, they determine that a further review of school climate is required. The principal and the vice-principal refer to the Ontario Leadership Framework to identify leadership practices that pertain to equity and inclusive education. More information on the self-assessment process is available at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/framework.html>.

The principal and vice-principal realize that every leadership practice and all of the PLRs they draw on to provide effective leadership are connected in some way to equity and inclusive education. In considering the context of the school, they feel that “Building Relationships and Developing People” is a domain in the framework that could help facilitate discussion and growth. Focusing on this domain also provides an opportunity to begin a dialogue about the PLRs, which are needed to effectively implement the leadership practices.

The principal and vice-principal facilitate a session with the staff in which they provide the “Building Relationships and Developing People” domain of the framework to the staff. The staff are asked to brainstorm in groups what the leadership practices might “look like” in their school (see the next page for the results of this activity) and which PLRs they may want to strengthen. This information will be used by staff to reflect on the equity and inclusive education implementation plan for the school.

## Building Relationships and Developing People

### Leadership Practices – What They Look Like When Enacted by School Leaders\*

#### *Stimulating growth in the professional capacities of staff*

- School leaders challenge staff to continually re-examine the extent to which their practices support the learning of all their students.

#### *Modelling the school's values and practices*

- School leaders exemplify, through their actions, the school's core values and desired practices.

#### *Building trusting relationships with and among staff, students, and parents*

- School leaders demonstrate respect, care, and personal regard for students, staff, and parents;
- School leaders encourage staff, students, and parents to demonstrate respect, care, and personal regard for one another.

\*Selected from the OLF School-Level Leadership placemat, available at <http://live.iel.immix.ca/content/framework>.

### Staff Brainstorm Results

To promote equity and inclusive education as we enact the leadership practices in the Building Relationships and Developing People domain of the OLF, it is important to reflect upon:

- new ways to use and adapt materials, and learn about the impact of human rights on school climate;
- equitable access to opportunity and achievement;
- high expectations for all staff and students to perform well and achieve success;
- curriculum, library, and classroom materials, visual displays, and other resources, to see what has been omitted or included and to assess whether any discriminatory bias is present;
- behaviour that is consistent with the principles of equity and inclusive education;
- beliefs and assumptions about a diverse society;
- aspects of diversity with respect to “figures of authority”, role models, and rules.

Directors of education and supervisory officers can use the school-level leadership component of the OLF, referenced above, since almost all of the practices it describes are also part of successful system-level leadership. Because of the differing contexts for most system-level leadership, qualitatively different enactments of the same practices are needed for system leadership to be successful. The system-level leadership component of the OLF adds to the school-level leadership practices a set of unique practices used by effective system-level leaders, organized by the nine characteristics of strong districts outlined in the District Effectiveness Framework (DEF). (Both are available at <http://live.iel.immix.ca/content/framework>.)

Directors and supervisory officers play an essential role by enacting these system-level leadership practices, which contribute to the development and strengthening of the nine characteristics of strong districts. (See *Strong Districts and Their Leadership* (2013), which provides the evidence base for these nine characteristics, at <http://live.iel.immix.ca/content/research>).



## Appendix 2

### Sample Questions for Board and School Surveys

**BOARD AND/OR SCHOOL LEADERS** may wish to gather information from or assess perceptions of staff, students, parents, and community members with respect to racism, diversity, equity, inclusive education, safety, bullying, and harassment. The purpose may be to establish baseline data, to assess program effectiveness, or to measure policy implementation.

The following surveys offer a variety of types of questions that board and school leaders may find helpful.

- Ministry of Education, Sample School Climate Surveys (Student, Grades 4–6; Student, Grades 7–12; Parent; Teacher), available at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/climate.html>
- Ottawa-Carlton District School Board, *Student Survey Grades JK-6 and Grades 7-12*, available at <http://www.ocdsb.ca>
- Simcoe County District School Board, *About Your School: A Survey for Students in Grades 4–6; About Your School: A Survey for Students in Grades 7–12*, available at [www.scdsb.on.ca](http://www.scdsb.on.ca)
- Sudbury Catholic School Board, *Tell Them From Me* online survey tool, available at <http://www.scdsb.edu.on.ca>
- Thames-Valley District School Board, *Safe Schools Surveys – Elementary Schools and Secondary Schools*, available at <http://www.tvdsb.ca>
- Toronto District School Board, *Grade 7/8 Student Census and Grade 9–12 Student Census*, available at [www.tdsb.on.ca](http://www.tdsb.on.ca)
- Upper Grand District School Board, *Safe, Equitable and Inclusive Schools Survey*, available at <http://www.ugdsb.on.ca>
- York Region District School Board, *School Climate Survey 2010 – Elementary and Secondary Students; School/Workplace Climate Survey for Staff 2011; School Climate Survey 2011 Parents/Guardians*, available at <http://www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca>



## Appendix 3

### Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 (2013)



Ministry of Education

### Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119

**Date of Issue:** April 22, 2013

**Effective:** Until revoked or modified

**Subject:** DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICIES IN ONTARIO SCHOOLS

**Application:** Directors of Education  
Secretary-Treasurers of School Authorities  
Superintendents  
Principals of Elementary Schools  
Principals of Secondary Schools  
Principals of Provincial and Demonstration Schools

**Reference:** This memorandum replaces Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119, “Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools”, June 24, 2009.

#### INTRODUCTION

Ontario’s publicly funded education system supports and reflects the democratic values of fairness, equity, and respect for all. Recognizing the importance of education, the Ontario government has established three core priorities:

- high levels of student achievement
- reduced gaps in student achievement
- increased public confidence in publicly funded education

An equitable, inclusive education system is fundamental to achieving these core priorities, and is recognized internationally as critical to delivering a high-quality education for all learners. “Equity and excellence go hand in hand. ... In a truly equitable system, factors such as race, gender, and socio-economic status do not prevent students from achieving ambitious outcomes. Our experience shows that barriers can be removed when all education partners create the conditions needed for success.”<sup>1</sup>

Providing a high-quality education for all is a key means of fostering social cohesion based on an inclusive society where diversity is affirmed within a framework of common values that promote the well-being of all citizens. Ontarians share a belief in the need to develop students’ character and to prepare students for their role in society as engaged, productive, and responsible citizens. Active and engaged citizens are aware of their rights, but more importantly, they accept responsibility for protecting their rights and the rights of others.

1. Ministry of Education, Ontario, *Reach Every Student: Energizing Ontario Education* (Toronto: Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2008), p. 8.



On April 6, 2009, the Minister of Education released *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* (hereafter referred to as "the strategy"). This document sets out a vision for an equitable and inclusive education system. The action plan contained in the document focuses on respecting diversity, promoting inclusive education, and identifying and eliminating discriminatory biases, systemic barriers, and power dynamics that limit students' learning, growth, and contribution to society. These barriers and biases, whether overt or subtle, intentional or unintentional, need to be identified and addressed.

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide direction to school boards<sup>2</sup> on the review, development, implementation, and monitoring of equity and inclusive education policies to support student achievement and well-being. Our schools need to help students develop into highly skilled, knowledgeable, and caring citizens who can contribute to both a strong economy and a cohesive society.

## BACKGROUND

The ministry has issued several policy/program memoranda to support equity, student achievement, and positive school climates, including Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119, "Development and Implementation of School Board Policies on Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity", July 13, 1993.<sup>3</sup> When No. 119 (1993) was issued, many boards focused on creating learning environments that respected the cultures of all students. The antiracism and ethnocultural policies contained in No. 119 (1993) went "beyond a broad focus on multiculturalism and race relations"<sup>4</sup> to focus on identifying and changing institutional policies and procedures, as well as individual behaviours and practices that may be racist in their impact. No. 119 (1993) sought to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to live in an increasingly diverse world, appreciate diversity, and reject discriminatory behaviours and attitudes. Several boards have expanded these antiracism and ethnocultural policies into more inclusive equity policies that address a broader range of discriminatory factors.

In addition, it is now recognized that such factors as race, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, gender, and class can intersect to create additional barriers for some students. Many organizations, including the United Nations, are recognizing the compounding impact of such intersections on discrimination. Ministry and board policies, therefore, should also take intersecting factors into account.

Although much has been done – and continues to be done – to build the publicly funded education system's capacity to foster equity and inclusiveness in boards and schools, evidence indicates that some

2. In this memorandum, *school board(s)* and *board(s)* refer to district school boards and school authorities.

3. Others include Policy/Program Memoranda No. 108, "Opening or Closing Exercises in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools", January 12, 1989; No. 127, "The Secondary School Literacy Graduation Requirement", October 13, 2004; No. 128, "The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct", December 5, 2012; No. 144, "Bullying Prevention and Intervention", December 5, 2012; and No. 145, "Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour", December 5, 2012. Sections 27–29 ("Religion in Schools") of Regulation 298 replaced No. 112, "Education about Religion in the Public Elementary and Secondary Schools", December 6, 1990.

4. Ministry of Education, Ontario, *Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation* (Toronto: Ministry of Education, Ontario, 1993), p. 7.



groups of students continue to encounter discriminatory barriers to learning. Recent research shows that students who feel connected to teachers, to other students, and to the school itself do better academically.<sup>5</sup>

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 (2009) broadened the scope of No. 119 (1993) to take into account a wide range of equity factors, as well as all of the prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Ontario Human Rights Code and other similar considerations. No. 119 (2009) fully supported and expanded on the principles of antiracism and ethnocultural equity that were outlined in No. 119 (1993), and did not reflect a weakened or reduced commitment to antiracism or ethnocultural equity. By promoting a system-wide approach to identifying and removing discriminatory biases and systemic barriers, it has helped to ensure that all students feel welcomed and accepted in school life.

This memorandum brings No. 119 (2009) up to date so that it is in accordance with amendments to the Education Act; that is, school boards are now required to develop and implement an equity and inclusive education policy. This memorandum also updates No. 119 (2009) to reflect the fact that gender identity and gender expression are dimensions of diversity under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR BOARDS

All publicly funded school boards are required to develop, implement, and monitor an equity and inclusive education policy that includes a religious accommodation guideline, in accordance with the requirements set out in this memorandum and the strategy, and that complies with relevant legislation, including amendments to the Education Act.<sup>6</sup>

The strategy is designed to promote fundamental human rights as described in the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, with which school boards are already required to comply, subject to subsection 93(1) of the Constitution Act, 1867, and section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Boards must comply with all other aspects of the Education Act and regulations made under the act, including Ontario Regulation 181/98, which pertains to students with special education needs.<sup>7</sup> Boards must also comply with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2001), and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005), as applicable. Other relevant legislation, such as the Youth Criminal Justice Act, must be referenced where appropriate. In addition, boards should refer to *English Language Learners / ESL and ELD Programs and Services: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2007*; *Ontario's Aménagement linguistique Policy for French-Language Education, 2005*;<sup>8</sup> and *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy*

5. D. Goleman, *Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships* (New York, NY: Bantam, 2006).

6. Paragraph 8(1)(29.1) of the Education Act gives the Minister of Education the authority to require all school boards to develop and implement an equity and inclusive education policy, and, if required by the Minister, to submit the policy to the Minister and implement changes to the policy as directed by the Minister.

7. Ontario Regulation 181/98, "Identification and Placement of Exceptional Pupils", requires school boards to consider placement of students with special education needs into regular classrooms before considering alternative placements.

8. Boards should also refer to Policy/Program Memorandum No. 148, "Policies Governing Admission to French-Language Schools in Ontario", April 22, 2009; and *L'admission, l'accueil et l'accompagnement des élèves dans les écoles de langue française de l'Ontario – Énoncé de politique et directives, 2009*.



*Framework, 2007*. They should also consult with their legal counsel and Freedom of Information coordinators to ensure that they are fulfilling all their legal responsibilities.

The equity and inclusive education policy of a board must address the eight areas of focus outlined in this memorandum, and must include a guideline on religious accommodation and an implementation plan. During the cyclical process of reviewing and revising their policies, boards will take steps to align all their other policies and procedures (e.g., on safe and accepting schools, student discipline, staff hiring and development) with their equity and inclusive education policy. This process will help to ensure that the principles of equity and inclusive education are embedded in all aspects of board and school operations.

School board policies must be comprehensive and must cover the prohibited grounds of discrimination set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code. The code prohibits discrimination on any of the following grounds: race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, citizenship, ethnic origin, disability, creed (e.g., religion), sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, family status, and marital status. Boards may also address related issues resulting from the intersection of the dimensions of diversity that can also act as a systemic barrier to student learning.

## **POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

Equity and inclusive education policies and implementation plans will be consistent with the guiding principles and goals set out in the strategy, with the requirements in this memorandum, and with the revised ministry document entitled *Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation, 2013* (hereafter referred to as “the guidelines”). These three documents should be used together when boards are reviewing and/or developing and implementing their equity and inclusive education policy, and when conducting their cyclical reviews of all their other policies.

When reviewing or developing their equity and inclusive education policy, boards are expected to consult widely with students, parents,<sup>9</sup> principals, teachers and other staff, school councils, their Special Education Advisory Committee, their Parent Involvement Committee and other committees (e.g., Diversity Committee; First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Advisory Committee), federations and unions, service organizations, and community partners in order to reflect the diversity of the community.

Boards have flexibility to adapt their equity and inclusive education policy to take into account local needs and circumstances.

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9. In this memorandum, *parent(s)* refers to parent(s) and guardian(s).

## **Areas of Focus**

The three goals of the equity and inclusive education strategy are as follows:

- *shared and committed leadership* by the ministry, boards, and schools to eliminate discrimination through the identification and removal of biases and barriers
- *equity and inclusive education policies and practices* to support positive learning environments that are respectful and welcoming to all
- *accountability and transparency* with ongoing progress demonstrated and communicated to the ministry and the community

In order to achieve these goals, each school board policy on equity and inclusive education will cover the following eight areas of focus.

### ***1. Board policies, programs, guidelines, and practices***

Through cyclical policy reviews, boards will embed the principles of equity and inclusive education in all their other policies, programs, guidelines, and practices, so that an equity and inclusive education focus is an integral part of every board's operations and permeates everything that happens in its schools.

Boards should make every effort to identify and remove discriminatory biases and systemic barriers that may limit the opportunities of individuals from diverse communities for employment, mentoring, retention, promotion, and succession planning in all board and school positions. The board's work force should reflect the diversity within the community so that students, parents, and community members are able to see themselves represented. The board's work force should also be capable of understanding and responding to the experiences of the diverse communities within the board's jurisdiction.

### ***2. Shared and committed leadership***

Board and school leaders must be responsive to the diverse nature of Ontario's communities. Leadership is second only to teaching in its impact on student outcomes. School boards and schools are expected to provide leadership that is committed to identifying and removing discriminatory biases and systemic barriers to learning. Specifically, boards will identify a contact person to liaise with the ministry and other boards to share challenges, promising practices, and resources.

In accordance with the principles of the ministry's Ontario Leadership Strategy, effective board and school leaders promote the development of collaborative environments in which participants share a commitment to equity and inclusive education principles and practices. This collaborative approach includes and supports the active engagement of students, parents, federations and unions, colleges and universities, service organizations, and other community partners.

### ***3. School–community relationships***

Schools and boards will continue building their capacity – with the active engagement of parents and school community partners – to create and sustain a positive school climate that supports student achievement and well-being. Each board and its schools should review the structures of existing committees and partnerships to help ensure that they reflect the principles of equity and inclusive education. Boards should expand upon their outreach efforts in order to foster new partnerships that engage a cross-section of diverse students, parents, staff, community members, and various organizations, including business groups (e.g., business education councils). Boards are encouraged to draw upon the expertise of their partners to explore innovative ways of sharing resources that can help them meet the diverse needs of their students and provide new and relevant learning opportunities. Strong, positive, and respectful relationships are necessary to effect real change so that all students can reach their potential regardless of personal circumstances.

### ***4. Inclusive curriculum and assessment practices***

Students need to feel engaged in and empowered by what they are learning, supported by teachers and staff, and welcome in their learning environment. To this end, boards and their schools will use inclusive curriculum and assessment practices and effective instructional strategies that reflect the diverse needs of all students and the learning pathways that they are taking. Schools must provide students and staff with authentic and relevant opportunities to learn about diverse histories, cultures, and perspectives. Students should be able to see themselves represented in the curriculum, programs, and culture of the school. Also, since schools have a pivotal role in developing the work force of tomorrow, students should be able to see themselves represented in the teaching, administrative, and support staff employed at the school.

Boards are expected to draw upon strategies that have been shown by the evidence to support student success and reduce achievement gaps. These include reviewing resources, instruction, and assessment and evaluation practices to identify and eliminate stereotypes, discriminatory biases, and systemic barriers. For example, schools could make use of differentiated instruction, which takes into account the backgrounds and experiences of students in order to respond to their individual interests, aptitudes, and learning needs.

In order to help ensure that assessment and evaluation are valid and reliable and lead to improvement of student learning, teachers must use assessment and evaluation strategies outlined in the assessment and evaluation section of the curriculum policy documents. Assessment tasks should be designed to ensure consistency of standards, and any discriminatory biases in the way students' work is assessed and evaluated should be identified and addressed.

### ***5. Religious accommodation***

School board policies on religious accommodation must be in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code and the requirements stated in Policy/Program Memorandum No. 108, "Opening or Closing Exercises in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools", and in sections 27–29 ("Religion in Schools") of Regulation 298. As part of their equity and inclusive education policy and implementation plan,



boards will include a religious accommodation guideline in keeping with the Ontario Human Rights Code, which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of creed (e.g., religion) and imposes a duty to accommodate.<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, boards are expected to take appropriate steps to provide religious accommodation for students and staff.

### ***6. School climate and the prevention of discrimination and harassment***

Board policies on equity and inclusive education are designed to foster a positive school climate that is free from discriminatory or harassing behaviour. A positive and inclusive school climate is one where all members of the school community feel safe, included, welcomed, and accepted. The principles of equity and inclusive education support a whole-school approach to foster positive student behaviour. These principles must also be applied in progressive discipline, particularly when it is necessary to take into account mitigating and other factors.<sup>11</sup> When relationships are founded on mutual respect, a culture of respect becomes the norm. Boards will also put procedures in place that will enable students and staff to report incidents of discrimination and harassment safely, and that will enable boards to respond in a timely manner.

Regular school and board monitoring of school climate is essential. Monitoring through school climate surveys, as outlined in Policy/Program Memorandum No. 144, “Bullying Prevention and Intervention”, can help identify inappropriate behaviours, barriers, or issues that should be addressed. Boards are therefore expected to incorporate questions on equity and inclusive education in their school climate surveys. Boards must require schools to conduct anonymous school climate surveys of their students and staff and the parents of their students at least once every two years, in accordance with subsection 169.1(2.1) of the Education Act.

### ***7. Professional learning***

Professional learning activities must be ongoing, evidence-based, and focused on positive outcomes. Boards will therefore provide opportunities for teachers (including guidance counsellors), support staff, administrators, and trustees to participate in training on topics such as antiracism, antidiscrimination, and gender-based violence, and will provide information for students and parents to increase their knowledge and understanding of equity and inclusive education. Boards are also encouraged to draw upon existing expertise within their own organization, other boards, and their own community partners and agencies. Changing individual and collective behaviour, as well as organizational and institutional practices, will help to ensure that the education system is free from discrimination.

10. Under the Ontario Human Rights Code, the duty to accommodate requires accommodation to the point of undue hardship. For further details, see Ontario Human Rights Commission, *Policy on Creed and the Accommodation of Religious Observances* (1996), available at [www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca).

11. Ontario Regulation 472/07, “Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils”, identifies mitigating factors and other factors that must be taken into account in individual cases.

### ***8. Accountability and transparency***

Ongoing and open communication to keep all stakeholders informed of a board's goals and progress will increase transparency and public confidence in the board and its schools. It is expected that boards will post their equity and inclusive education policy on their website.

Board and school improvement plans, within the context of a board's strategic multi-year plan, will take into consideration the board's equity and inclusive education policy. The plans should focus on identifying and removing any barriers to student learning in order to reduce gaps in achievement and provide a respectful and responsive school climate.

Each board will post the Director of Education's annual report on its website, which will inform the ministry and the local community about the progress the board has made in meeting its strategic objectives in the previous school year and the action the board is taking in those strategic priority areas where goals are not being met.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

The ministry recognizes that school boards are at different stages in the implementation of an equity and inclusive education policy. The ministry expects boards to demonstrate continuous improvement, so that progress is evident on an annual basis towards the goal of embedding the equity and inclusive education policy into all operations of the board.

Implementation plans will:

- contain clearly stated annual objectives and measurable outcomes at both the board and school levels;
- reflect consultation with community partners, and show evidence of active and ongoing partnerships with students, parents, and diverse communities;
- contain indicators for measuring and evaluating progress.

### **RESOURCES**

To support boards in developing, implementing, and monitoring their policy on equity and inclusive education, the ministry is providing practical strategies, advice, and templates in the guidelines. The ministry will also review and conduct research on promising practices in equity and inclusive education, and will disseminate this information to boards.



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**APPENDIX: DEFINITIONS**

The following definitions are included for the purposes of this policy/program memorandum only.

**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, gender expression, 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.



# Appendix 4

## Former Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 (1993)<sup>4</sup>

This document, which was replaced by PPM No. 119, “Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools”, is included here to provide school boards with additional information that will enhance their understanding of, and ability to apply, an antiracist approach in identifying and removing systemic barriers for racialized students. Boards are advised to refer to this memorandum to inform their review and/or development and implementation of a thorough and comprehensive equity and inclusive education policy.<sup>5</sup>

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4. This reproduction of Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 (1993) does not include the list of Ministry of Education and Training Regional Offices provided in the original, as this information is no longer current.

5. This is a scanned reproduction of PPM No. 119 (1993), as it is not available online. To request an alternative format, contact Service Ontario at 1-800-668-9938 (TTY:1-800-268-7095).



Ministry of Education  
and Training

Issued under the authority  
of the Deputy Minister  
of Education and Training

**Policy/Program  
Memorandum  
No. 119**

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**Date of Issue:** July 13, 1993                      **Effective:** Until revoked  
or modified

**Subject:** DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL BOARD  
POLICIES ON ANTIRACISM AND ETHNOCULTURAL EQUITY

**Application:** Chairpersons of School Boards and  
Minority-Language Sections<sup>1</sup>  
Directors of Education

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**Introduction**

The Government of Ontario is committed to the goal of assuring high-quality education and equitable educational outcomes for all students in English- and French-language schools. The government also considers it essential that students be prepared to function effectively in an increasingly diverse world.

There is growing recognition that educational structures, policies, and programs have been mainly European in perspective and have failed to take into account the viewpoints, experiences, and needs of Aboriginal peoples<sup>2</sup> and many racial and ethnocultural minorities. As a result, systemic inequities exist in the school system that limit the opportunities for Aboriginal and other students and staff members of racial and ethnocultural minorities to fulfil their potential. Educators therefore need to identify and change institutional policies and procedures and individual behaviour and practices that are racist in their impact, if not in intent. In this regard, antiracist and ethnocultural equity education goes beyond multicultural education, which focuses on teaching about the cultures and traditions of diverse groups.

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1. In this document, the term "school board" includes French- and English-language sections.

2. The terms "Aboriginal" and "Aboriginal peoples" refer to the original inhabitants, or indigenous peoples, of Canada and their descendants. Aboriginal peoples include the Indian, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada.



### Background

In 1987, a provincial advisory committee produced a report entitled "The Development of a Policy on Race and Ethnocultural Equity" that was intended to be a draft model policy document on race relations for school boards. This report was validated province-wide.

In the winter and spring of 1993, the ministry conducted a series of round-table discussions with school boards, which provided information on their activities, perspectives, and needs in the areas of antiracism and ethnocultural equity. Information received at these meetings has been used in developing the present policy directions and requirements.

### Legislative Requirements

In accordance with an amendment made in 1992 to the Education Act,<sup>3</sup> every school board shall develop a policy on antiracism and ethnocultural equity, as well as a plan for implementing its policy. Boards shall then submit their policies and plans to the Minister for approval, and implement changes as directed by the Minister. Boards' implementation of their policies will entail reviewing their operations and making fundamental changes in many aspects of their operations. Some of the changes required will take place immediately; others will take place over time. The document entitled Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation has been produced to assist school boards in the development of their policies and implementation plans.

Several of the requirements for school board policies on antiracism and ethnocultural equity fall under the exclusive jurisdiction of the sections of boards. French-language school boards and French-language sections will develop policies and implementation plans that respect Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and Parts XII and XIII of the Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter E.2. Sections may submit their policies and implementation plans as part of the overall board submission.

### Timelines for Development, Approval, and Implementation of Policies

The ministry recognizes that school boards are at different stages in the development of policies on antiracism and ethnocultural equity and in the implementation of related

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3. Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter E.2, section 8, subsection 1, paragraph 29.1 (July 1992 edition).

activities. Boards that already have related policies in place shall review and revise these policies to ensure that they meet the requirements outlined in this memorandum. These boards may begin submitting their revised policies and implementation plans to the ministry for approval in October 1993. School boards that are currently developing policies and implementation plans shall submit them to the ministry for approval as soon as they are completed.

Boards shall submit their policies and their implementation plans to the ministry no later than March 31, 1995.

Boards shall begin implementing their policies on antiracism and ethnocultural equity upon receiving approval from the ministry. Implementation of these policies must begin by September 1, 1995.

#### Requirements for Policies and Implementation Plans

School board policies and implementation plans shall be comprehensive and shall be designed to integrate the principles of antiracism and ethnocultural equity into all aspects of education programs and board operations. The policies and plans shall reflect a commitment by board administration and staff to identifying and addressing systemic inequities and barriers affecting Aboriginal peoples and racial and ethnocultural minorities in the planning and delivery of education programs and services.

Policies and implementation plans shall address the following ten major areas of focus:

- board policies, guidelines, and practices
- leadership
- school-community partnership
- curriculum
- student languages
- student evaluation, assessment, and placement
- guidance and counselling
- racial and ethnocultural harassment
- employment practices<sup>4</sup>
- staff development

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4. For details see the section on "Employment Equity" on page 5.

The implementation plans shall:

- be five-year plans;
- contain clearly stated annual objectives and outcomes for implementation at both the system and the school levels;
- contain a plan of action to identify and eliminate racial and ethnocultural biases and barriers in board policies and practices and in the planning and delivery of educational programs;
- involve partnership activities with local communities, including Aboriginal groups, diverse racial and ethnocultural groups, and other education partners;
- contain mechanisms for evaluating progress, including an accountability mechanism for all of the school board staff.

The policy development and implementation processes shall be conducted in the language of the board. Boards and sections are encouraged to find alternative communication strategies when members of the community involved in the development of the policies and the implementation plan do not speak the language of the board.

At all stages of implementation, a high priority shall be assigned to broadening the curriculum to include diverse perspectives and to eliminating stereotyping. In the implementation of the policies, it is essential that staff members are made aware of the issues and are given opportunities to develop skills in dealing with racism.

#### Approval of Policies and Implementation Plans

Board policies and implementation plans are to be submitted for approval to the appropriate regional office of the Ministry of Education and Training within the specified timelines. The ministry will review the policies and implementation plans and determine whether or not they satisfy the requirements for approval. The ministry will use the document Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards when evaluating boards' policies and implementation plans.

#### Monitoring of Implementation

There shall be community and student involvement in monitoring policy implementation. School boards shall submit annual progress reports to the appropriate regional office of the Ministry of Education and Training. In addition, the ministry will conduct cyclical audits of the policy implementation.

The ministry will make use of the document Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards in monitoring implementation of boards' antiracism and ethnocultural equity policies.

#### Employment Equity

Equitable employment practices form an integral part of boards' antiracism and ethnocultural equity policies and practices. The work force in the school board should reflect and be capable of understanding and responding to the experiences of Ontario's culturally and racially diverse population.

The proposed Employment Equity Act (Bill 79)<sup>5</sup> will provide all employers, including school boards, with direction for the development, implementation, and monitoring of employment equity plans. Consequently, school boards are advised not to undertake work-force surveys, define designated groups or subgroups, or determine numerical goals for designated groups before the proposed Employment Equity Act becomes law.

In the meantime, boards should begin to identify systemic barriers in employment, as well as establish equity principles, in order to lay the foundations for the development of employment equity plans in the future. Further information will be available after the proposed Employment Equity Act becomes law.

#### Ministry Assistance

The resource document Changing Perspectives will be released along with Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards. Vers une nouvelle optique, the French-language adaptation of Changing Perspectives, will be released in the fall of 1993. The ministry will be publishing additional resource materials in the future to assist boards in implementing their policies. The ministry's regional office staff are available to assist school boards with the development of policies and implementation plans and with the implementation of the policies.

Please share the information contained in this memorandum with all school board personnel.

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5. An Act to Provide for Employment Equity for Aboriginal People, People With Disabilities, Members of Racial Minorities and Women.



## **Appendix 5**

### **Additional Policy/Program Memoranda**

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 108,  
“Opening or Closing Exercises in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools”.  
January 12, 1989.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/108.html>

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 120,  
“Reporting Violent Incidents to the Ministry of Education”.  
June 1, 1994. Revised May 16, 2011.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/ppm120.pdf>

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 128,  
“The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct”.  
October 4, 2007.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/128.pdf>

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 140,  
“Incorporating Methods of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) into Programs for  
Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)”.  
May 17, 2007.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/140.html>

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 144,  
“Bullying Prevention and Intervention”. October 4, 2007. Revised December 5, 2012.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/144.pdf>

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 145,  
“Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour”. October 4, 2007.  
Revised December 5, 2012.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/145.pdf>

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 148,  
“Policies Governing Admission to French-language Schools in Ontario”.  
April 22, 2009.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/ppm148.pdf>

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 149,  
“Protocol for Partnerships with External Agencies for Provision of Services by  
Regulated Health Professionals, Regulated Social Service Professionals, and  
Paraprofessionals”.  
September 25, 2009.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/ppm149.pdf>

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 155,  
“Diagnostic Assessment in Support of Student Learning”.  
January 7, 2013.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/ppm155.pdf>

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 156,  
“Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Education Needs”.  
February 1, 2013.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/ppm156.pdf>



## Appendix 6

### Resources: Social Justice Begins With Me and Racism Hurts

**THE ONTARIO TEACHERS' FEDERATION (OTF)** has broadened the Safe@School website (<http://safeatschool.ca/>) to offer teachers and the educational community a repertoire of relevant resources, as well as three different professional learning modules. These interactive modules were developed using the Centre ontarien de prévention des agressions's (COPA) approach to prevention education. (COPA is a francophone organization with English-language capacity.) The modules are based on research and best practices for creating healthy and safe school environments and include the following topics: bullying prevention; equity and inclusive education (with a focus on homophobia, racism, and sexism); and parents and guardians.

The teacher federations have developed a number of excellent resources. The following are two examples from the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO).

#### Social Justice Begins With Me

This is an ETFO literature-based curriculum resource kit for all elementary classes, from Early Years to Grade 8. This resource builds on the concepts originally introduced in *We're Erasing Prejudice for Good*. It is organized around ten monthly themes: Self-Esteem, Sharing Our Lives, Peace, Building Supportive Communities, Rights of the Child, Caring Hands, Untie the Knots of Prejudice, Local and Global Citizenship, True Worth and Beauty, and Circles and Cycles.

#### Racism Hurts

ETFO and the Ontario Human Rights Commission collaboratively developed a resource, "Racism Hurts", for elementary students. The package includes posters (see p. 78) and curriculum resources that assist teachers in beginning discussions with elementary students about human rights, discrimination, and racism.



The resource has curricular links to the language learning area of the Kindergarten program (2010–11), as well as to the Grade 1-8 language curriculum (focusing on

reading, writing, oral communication, and media literacy). It also has links to expectations in drama, within the Grade 1-8 arts curriculum. The resource suggests activities for students. The narrative in the poster below is one example of an activity that can be used with Grade 4 to 6 students. Parveen's story illustrates the impact of racism on a student.

Parveen was proud of her name and worked hard to fit in with her classmates. She was happy with herself just the way she was, but her name and brown skin drew unwanted attention. This made her unhappy, sometimes she cried.

Did her name or the colour of her skin make her different? Would changing her name help? She soon realized that even if she did change her name, she would never be able to change her brown skin.

**racism hurts**

  Graphic Design by students of Seneca College.

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## Appendix 7

### Resources from the Ontario Human Rights Commission

#### Introduction

The following resources, developed by the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC), will be useful to school boards when they review, revise, or refine their equity and inclusive education policy and related policies.

The commission's policies, guidelines, publications, fact sheets, and teacher tool kit are part of a number of resources for creating a safe and "positive school climate that fosters and promotes equity, inclusive education, and diversity" (Ontario, Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 11).

Extensive resources on prohibited grounds such as race, colour, citizenship, ancestry, ethnic origin, place of origin, sex, sexual orientation, and disability are available in both English and French at [www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca).

#### Policy and Guidelines

- Policy and Guidelines on Disability and the Duty to Accommodate (2009)
- Policy and Guidelines on Racism and Racial Discrimination (2009)
- Policy on Creed and the Accommodation of Religious Observances (2009)
- Policy on Discrimination and Harassment because of Sexual Orientation (2009)
- Policy on Preventing Discrimination Based on Mental Health Disabilities and Addictions (2014)
- Policy on Preventing Discrimination because of Gender Identity and Gender Expression (2014)
- Policy on Preventing Sexual and Gender-based Harassment (2011)

## **Additional Resources**

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### **Count Me In! Collecting Human Rights–based Data (2010)**

This resource guide was prepared by the commission for human resource professionals and other people or groups considering a data collection project, or seeking support to do one. The guide outlines the commission’s interpretation of the benefits of data collection and highlights key concepts and practical considerations for organizations that are considering gathering data on Code and non-Code grounds.

### **Guidelines for Collecting Data on Enumerated Grounds Under the Code (2009)**

The Ontario Human Rights Code permits the collection and analysis of data based on enumerated grounds, such as race, disability, or sex, as long as it is for legitimate purposes and not contrary to the Code. Code-legitimate purposes include monitoring and evaluating discrimination, identifying and removing systemic barriers, ameliorating disadvantage, and promoting substantive equality. This guide assists with the collection of data within the Code requirements.

### **Guidelines on Accessible Education (2009)**

These guidelines contain the commission’s interpretation of provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code relating to discrimination against students because of disability. The guidelines address topics such as the principles of accommodation, creating a welcoming environment, and accommodation process and planning.

### **Guidelines on Developing Human Rights Policies and Procedures (2008)**

These guidelines contain the commission’s interpretation of provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code relating to organizational policies and procedures to address human rights issues and prevent violations.

### **Human Rights at Work (3rd ed., 2008)**

This publication helps employers to comply with the Ontario Human Rights Code in all aspects of employment and in creating a workplace environment in which every employee’s rights are respected and protected.

### **Supporting Bias-Free Progressive Discipline in Schools: A Resource Guide for School and System Leaders (2013)**

This resource was jointly developed by the Ministry of Education and the OHRC. It is intended to guide school and system leaders in fostering a bias-free approach to progressive discipline, and early prevention and intervention practices to support positive student behaviour.

*The following published papers* provide assistance in understanding the term *intersectionality* and the concept of competing rights claims in applying the Code.

- *An Intersectional Approach to Discrimination: Addressing Multiple Grounds in Human Rights Claims* (2001)
- *Balancing Conflicting Rights: Towards an Analytical Framework* (2005)

*The OHRC website* also has fact sheets and brochures such as:

- Aboriginal Peoples in Ontario and the Ontario Human Rights Code
- Disability and Human Rights
- Gender Identity and Gender Expression
- How Far Does the Duty to Accommodate Go?
- Human Rights and Gender Identity and Gender Expression
- Racial Discrimination, Race and Racism
- Racism and Racial Discrimination – Data Collection
- Religious Rights
- Sexual Orientation and Human Rights (brochure)

*The teacher tool kit Teaching human rights in Ontario: A guide for Ontario schools* (2013) is an educational package for Grades 9 to 12 developed by the Ontario Human Rights Commission to be used by teachers in Ontario schools to teach their students about the provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code and the work of the commission. It is available in both English and French at <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/teaching-human-rights-ontario-guide-ontario-schools>.



## GLOSSARY

This glossary is provided to assist educators in understanding various terms used in this document, as well as terms they may encounter in the context of discussions of equity and inclusive education.

Terminology in the area of equity and inclusive education is constantly evolving. The Ministry of Education recognizes that terms and usages favoured by various groups and individuals, in various contexts, and at different points in time may differ. Educators may find the definitions provided here helpful for use in contexts such as training and professional learning.

***ableism.*** Prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination directed against people who have developmental, emotional, physical, sensory, or health-related disabilities. Ableism may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

***Aboriginal peoples.*** The descendants of the original inhabitants of North America. Section 35(2) of the Constitution Act, 1982, states: “In this Act, ‘Aboriginal peoples of Canada’ includes the Indian, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada”. These separate groups have unique heritages, languages, cultural practices, and spiritual beliefs. Their common link is their indigenous ancestry.

***acceptance.*** An affirmation and recognition of people whose race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status, abilities, or other, similar characteristics or attributes are different from one’s own. Acceptance goes beyond tolerance, in that it implies a positive and welcoming attitude.

***accommodation.*** An adjustment made to policies, programs, guidelines, or practices, including adjustments to physical settings and various types of criteria, that enables individuals to benefit from and take part in the provision of services equally and to participate equally and perform to the best of their ability in the workplace or an

educational setting. Accommodations are provided so that individuals are not disadvantaged or discriminated against on the basis of the prohibited grounds of discrimination identified in the Ontario Human Rights Code or other factors. (Refer to the Ontario Human Rights Commission's *Guidelines on Accessible Education* and *Policy and Guidelines on Disability and the Duty to Accommodate*, at [www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca).)

***accommodations for students with special education needs.*** The term *accommodations* has a specific meaning in special education. Accommodations for students with special education needs include special teaching and assessment strategies, human supports, and/or individualized equipment that help the student learn and demonstrate learning.

***ageism.*** Prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination against older adults, youth, and children, based on age. Ageism may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

***anti-Black racism.*** Prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination directed against Black people, including people of African descent. Anti-Black racism may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

***antidiscrimination education.*** An approach that seeks to eliminate from an educational system and its practices all forms of discrimination based on the prohibited grounds identified in the Ontario Human Rights Code and other factors. Anti-discrimination education seeks to identify and change educational policies, procedures, and practices that may unintentionally condone or foster discrimination, as well as the attitudes and behaviours that underlie and reinforce such policies and practices. It provides teachers and students with the knowledge and skills that will enable them to critically examine issues related to discrimination, power, and privilege. Antidiscrimination education promotes the removal of discriminatory biases and systemic barriers.

***antiracist.*** Seeking the elimination of racism in all its forms, including systemic racism.

***antiracist education.*** An approach that integrates the perspectives of Aboriginal and racialized communities into an educational system and its practices. Antiracist education seeks to identify and change educational policies, procedures, and practices that may foster racism, as well as the racist attitudes and behaviours that underlie and reinforce such policies and practices. It provides teachers and students with

the knowledge and skills that will enable them to critically examine issues related to racism, power, and privilege. Antiracist education promotes the removal of discriminatory biases and systemic barriers based on race.

**antisemitism.** Prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination directed against individual Jews or the Jewish people on the basis of their culture and religion. Antisemitism may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

**barrier.** An obstacle to equity that may be overt or subtle, intended or unintended, and systemic or specific to an individual or group, and that prevents or limits access to opportunities, benefits, or advantages that are available to other members of society.

**bias.** An opinion, preference, prejudice, or inclination that limits an individual's or a group's ability to make fair, objective, or accurate judgements.

**bisexual.** A person who is emotionally/romantically/sexually/physically attracted to and/or involved with both men and women.

**bullying.** Under the Education Act (s.1(1)), “aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a pupil, where (a) the behaviour is intended by the pupil to have the effect of, or the pupil ought to know that the behaviour would be likely to have the effect of, (i) causing harm, fear, or distress to another individual, including physical, psychological, social, or academic harm, harm to the individual's reputation, or harm to the individual's property, or (ii) creating a negative environment at a school for another individual, and (b) the behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the pupil and the individual based on factors such as size, strength, age, intelligence, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, disability, or the receipt of special education” and where the intimidation includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written, or other means.

**Code grounds.** The grounds of discrimination under the Ontario Human Rights Code: race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed (religion), sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, age, marital status (including same-sex partners), family status, receipt of public assistance (in housing accommodation only), and record of offences (in employment only). People are also protected from discrimination based on intersecting grounds (*see intersectionality*), or association with someone who identifies with a Code ground, or when they are perceived to be a member of a group identified by a Code ground. (Refer to [www.ohrc.on.ca/en/commission/about](http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/commission/about).)

**creed.** One of the prohibited grounds of discrimination in the Ontario Human Rights Code, interpreted by the Ontario Human Rights Commission to mean “religious creed” or “religion”. Creed is “a professed system and confession of faith, including both beliefs and observances or worship” that is “sincerely held” and includes non-deistic belief systems. Creed does not include “secular, moral, or ethical beliefs or political convictions” or “religions that promote violence or hate towards others or that violate criminal law”. Individuals who do not belong to a religion or practise any specific faith are also protected by the Code. (Refer to the *Ontario Human Rights Commission’s Policy on Creed and the Accommodation of Religious Observances*, at [www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca).)

**culture.** The totality of ideas, beliefs, values, knowledge, language, and way of life of a group of people who share a certain historical background.

**cyber-bullying.** Under the Education Act (s.1.0.0.2), bullying by electronic means, including by “(a) creating a web page or a blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person; (b) impersonating another person as the author of content or messages posted on the internet; and (c) communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals.” Cyber-bullying can involve the use of email, cell phones, text messages, and/or social media sites to threaten, harass, embarrass, socially exclude, or damage reputations and friendships. It may include put-downs or insults and can also involve spreading rumours; sharing private information, photos, or videos; or threatening to harm someone. Cyber-bullying is always aggressive and hurtful. (Refer to *Bullying – We Can All Help Stop It: A Guide for Parents of Elementary and Secondary School Students*, at [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/multi/english/BullyingEN.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/multi/english/BullyingEN.pdf).)

**disability.** A term that covers a broad range and degree of conditions, some visible and others not (e.g., physical, mental, and learning disabilities; hearing or vision disabilities; epilepsy; environmental sensitivities). A disability may be present from birth, may be caused by an accident, or may develop over time. (Refer to [www.ohrc.on.ca/en/issues/disability](http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/issues/disability).)

**discrimination.** Unfair or prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups on the basis of grounds set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code (e.g., race, sexual orientation, disability) or on the basis of other 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.

**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 identity, gender expression, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

**dominant group.** A group that is considered the most powerful and privileged of groups in a particular society and that exercises power and influence over others through social and political means.

**duty to accommodate.** The legal obligation that school boards, employers, unions, and service providers have under the Ontario Human Rights Code to take measures that enable people to benefit from and take part in the provision of services equally and to participate equally and perform to the best of their ability in the workplace or an educational setting. (Refer to [www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca).)

**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.

**ethnicity.** The shared national, ethnocultural, racial, linguistic, and/or religious heritage of a group of people, whether or not they live in their country of origin.

**First Nation.** A term that came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word Indian, which many found offensive. The term *First Nation* has been adopted to replace the word “band” in the names of communities.

**gay.** An individual who is emotionally/romantically/sexually/physically attracted to and/or involved with other individuals of the same sex.

**gender.** A term that refers to those characteristics of women and men that are socially constructed. (See also **sex** and **gender identity**.)

**gender expression.** The manner in which individuals express their gender identity to others. A person’s gender expression is often based on a social construct of gender, which is either stereotypically male or female. However, some individuals who do not see themselves as being either male or female but as some combination of the two genders, or as *without gender*, choose to express their identity in terms of a multiple model of gender, mixing both male and female expressions.



**gender identity.** A person's sense of self, with respect to being male or female. Gender identity is different from sexual orientation, and may be different from birth-assigned sex. (Refer to the Ontario Human Rights Commission's *Policy on Discrimination and Harassment because of Gender Identity*, at [www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca).)

**harassment.** A form of discrimination that may include unwelcome attention and remarks, jokes, threats, name-calling, touching, or other behaviour (including the display of pictures) that insults, offends, or demeans someone because of his or her identity. Harassment involves conduct or comments that are known to be, or should reasonably be known to be, offensive, inappropriate, intimidating, and hostile.

**hate crime.** A criminal offence, perpetrated on a person or property, that is motivated by bias or prejudice based on actual or perceived race, ancestry, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, or other, similar factors. Hate crimes can involve intimidation, harassment, physical force, or threats of physical force against a person or an entire group to which the person belongs. (Any act, including an act of omission, that is not a criminal offence but otherwise shares the characteristics of a hate crime is referred to as a *hate incident*.)

**hate propaganda.** Ideas, beliefs, and ideologies transmitted in written, oral, or electronic form for the purpose of creating, promoting, perpetuating, or exacerbating antagonistic, hateful, and belligerent attitudes or actions against a particular group or groups of people.

**homophobia.** A disparaging or hostile attitude or a negative bias, which may be overt or unspoken and which may exist at an individual and/or a systemic level, towards people who are, or who are perceived to be, lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT). (See also **LGBT**.)

**human rights.** Rights that recognize the dignity and worth of every person, and provide for equal rights and opportunities without discrimination, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status, or disability, as set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code, or other factors.

**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.

**intersectionality.** The overlapping, in the context of an individual or group, of two or more prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Ontario Human Rights Code, or other factors, which may result in additional biases or barriers to equity for that individual or group.

**Inuit.** Aboriginal people in northern Canada, living mainly in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, northern Quebec, and Labrador. Ontario has a very small Inuit population. The Inuit are not covered by the Indian Act.

**invisible minority.** People who may experience social inequities on the basis of factors that may not be visible, such as a disability or sexual orientation. The term may refer to a group that is small in number or it may connote inferior social position.

**Islamophobia.** Prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination directed against Muslims or Arabs on the basis of their culture and religion. Islamophobia may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

**lesbian.** A woman who is emotionally/romantically/sexually/physically attracted to and/or involved with another woman.

**LGBT.** The initialism used to refer to *lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender* people. A broader range of identities is also sometimes implied, or may be represented more explicitly by the initialism LGBT2SIQ, which stands for *lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual or two-spirited, intersex, and questioning*. (See also **homophobia**.)

**Métis.** People of mixed First Nation and European ancestry. The Métis culture draws on diverse ancestral origins, such as Scottish, Irish, French, Ojibwe, and Cree.

**minority group.** A group of people within a given society that has little or no access to social, economic, political, cultural, or religious power. The term may refer to a group that is small in number or it may connote inferior social position.

**multicultural education.** An approach to education, including administrative policies and procedures, curriculum, and learning activities, that recognizes the experience and contributions of diverse cultural groups. One of the aims of multicultural education is to promote the understanding of and respect for cultural and racial diversity.

**Ontario Human Rights Code (“the Code”).** A provincial law that gives everyone equal rights and opportunities, without discrimination, in specific areas such as education, jobs, housing, and services. The goal of the Code is to address and prevent discrimination and harassment. (Refer to [www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca).)

**positive school climate.** The school climate may be defined as the learning environment and relationships found within a school and school community. A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, included, and accepted, and actively promote positive behaviours and interactions. Principles of equity and inclusive education are embedded in the learning environment to support a positive school climate and a culture of mutual respect.

**power dynamics.** The process by which one group defines and subordinates other groups and subjects them to differential and unequal treatment.

**power imbalance.** A situation in which an individual or group is able to influence others and impose its beliefs, subjecting other individuals and/or groups to differential and unequal treatment.

**prejudice.** The pre-judgement (usually negative) of groups or individuals, or preconceived notions about them, based on misinformation, bias, or stereotypes.

**privilege.** The experience of freedoms, rights, benefits, advantages, access, and/or opportunities on the basis of group membership or social context, which is denied or not extended to members of all groups.

**progressive discipline.** A whole-school approach that uses a continuum of prevention programs, interventions, supports, and consequences to address inappropriate student behaviour, as well as a variety of strategies to promote and foster positive behaviours. Disciplinary measures are applied within a framework that shifts the focus from one that is solely punitive to one that is both corrective and supportive.

**queer.** A term for homosexuality that was once a pejorative but that has more recently been reclaimed by some or many of the LGBT movement to be used for self-identification in a positive way.

**race.** A social construct that groups people on the basis of common ancestry and characteristics such as colour of skin, shape of eyes, hair texture, and/or facial features. The term is used to designate the social categories into which societies divide people according to such characteristics. Race is often confused with ethnicity (a group of people who share a particular cultural heritage or background); there may be several ethnic groups within a racial group. (Refer to the Ontario Human Rights Commission's *Policy and Guidelines on Racism and Racial Discrimination*, at [www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca).)

**racialization.** The process through which groups come to be seen as different, and may be subjected to differential and unequal treatment.

**racialized group.** A group of people who may experience social inequities on the basis of race, colour, and/or ethnicity, and who may be subjected to differential treatment.

**racism.** A set of erroneous assumptions, opinions, and actions stemming from the belief that one race is inherently superior to another. Racism may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

**racist.** A term referring to the beliefs and/or actions of an individual, institution, or organization that imply (directly or indirectly) that certain groups are inherently superior to others.

**religion.** See *creed*.

**religious accommodation.** An obligation under the Ontario Human Rights Code to provide reasonable accommodation for students and employees who wish to observe the tenets or practices of their faith, as well as for those who wish not to participate in any form of religious observance. (See also *accommodation*.)

**sex.** The category of male or female based on characteristics that are biologically determined. (See also *gender*, *gender expression*, and *gender identity*.)

**sexism.** Prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination directed against people on the basis of their sex or gender. Sexism may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

**sexual orientation.** A person's sense of sexual attraction to people of the same sex, the opposite sex, or both sexes. (See also *LGBT*, and refer to the Ontario Human Rights Commission's *Policy on Discrimination and Harassment because of Sexual Orientation*, at [www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca).)

**social justice.** A concept based on the belief that each individual and group within a given society has a right to equal opportunity, civil liberties, and full participation in the social, educational, economic, institutional, and moral freedoms and responsibilities of that society.

***stereotype.*** A false or generalized, and usually negative, conception of a group of people that results in the unconscious or conscious categorization of each member of that group, without regard for individual differences. Stereotyping may be based on race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status, or disability, as set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code, or on the basis of other factors.

***systemic discrimination.*** A pattern of discrimination that arises out of apparently neutral institutional policies or practices, that is reinforced by institutional structures and power dynamics, and that results in the differential and unequal treatment of members of certain groups.

***transgender.*** A transgender person is a person whose gender identity, outward appearance, gender expression, and/or anatomy are not consistent with the conventional definitions or expectations of male and female; often used to represent a wide range of gender identities and behaviours.

***two-spirited.*** A term used by First Nations people to refer to a person having both the feminine and masculine spirits. It includes sexual or gender identity, sexual orientation, social roles, and a broad range of identities, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. (*See also LGBT.*)

***visible minority.*** A group of people who may experience social inequities on the basis of factors that may be visible, such as race, colour, and ethnicity, and who may be subjected to differential treatment. The term may refer to a group that is small in number or it may connote inferior social position. (*See also racialized group.*)



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14-065

ISBN 978-1-4606-3154-6 (PDF)

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