

## **EQUITY & INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

### **Statement of Policy**

The Peel District School Board is committed to [excellence in education](#) by supporting the equal opportunity for success for all students. This includes the commitment by the Board and its staff to anti-oppression practices through the identification and elimination of all types of discrimination as outlined in [Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy \(2009\)](#), ( "the Strategy" hereafter) in PPM No. 119, *Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools* (2013), [Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan \(2017\)](#) and the Anti-Racism Directorate's three year anti-racism strategic plan, [A Better Way Forward \(2017\)](#).

### **Background**

The Board's system goals reflect a commitment to providing equity of access and opportunity for all students and staff to learn, work and develop in a climate that is safe, positive, healthy, accessible and inclusive. The Board's [Plan for Student Success \(2016-2021\)](#) identifies Equity & Inclusion as one of four system-wide goals: to "achieve inclusion for all through continuous progress on equity."

The Board exists within a broader context of law and public policy that protects and defends human rights, and is committed to processes to search for solutions to reconcile [competing rights](#) on a case-by-case basis, if possible. The Peel Board is committed to ensuring a learning and working environment, through inclusive programs, curriculum, services, and operations, in which everyone is treated with respect, and no one is subject to discrimination. This commitment confirms and upholds the principles enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Constitution Act, 1982, the Ontario Human Rights Code ("the Code" hereafter) and the Education Act.

This policy sets out the Board's vision and goals for equity and inclusive education for all students, with reference to the eight areas of focus as identified by [Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy \(2009\)](#).

- Board Policies, Programs, Guidelines and Practices
- Shared and Committed Leadership
- School-Community Relationships
- Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment Practices
- Religious Accommodation
- School Climate and the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment
- Professional Learning
- Accountability and Transparency

This policy is aligned with and supports the principles and expectations of the following Peel Board Policies: Board Policy 51: Human Rights and Board Policy 48: Safe Schools.

## Application of Policy

It is intended that this policy will support members of the wider Peel Board community to understand and fulfill our shared obligation to anti-oppression, equity and inclusive education: that is, to promote the dignity, intersection, and equality of all identities protected under the *Code* in all aspects of learning and teaching throughout the Peel District School Board.

This policy is intended to support members of the Board 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.

This policy applies to all members of the Peel District School Board community. As well, this policy provides the framework for the review and/or creation of Board policies, procedures, practices and guidelines. The application of this policy also includes addressing issues of bullying, discrimination, harassment, and hate which occurs during a work, school or related event or when the infraction has an adverse impact on the learning or working environment.

It is the expectation of the Peel District School Board that all students, employees, trustees, families, visitors, contractors, third parties, and others invited to, visiting, using or permitting Board property, will support the goals of anti-oppression, equity and inclusion, outlined herein, when interacting with all members of the Peel District School Board community.

## **AREAS OF FOCUS: Commitments**

### **Board Structures, Policies, Procedures, Programs, Guidelines and Practices**

The Board commits that all Board structures, policies, procedures, programs, guidelines, and practices will inclusively support students, staff members, trustees and families in all communities. The Board aims to do so by incorporating the principles of anti-oppression, equity and inclusion into the development and regular review of structures, policies, procedures, programs, guidelines, and practices (consistent with the principles of the Ontario Human Rights Code). This area of focus establishes the framework for policy development and implementation in all the other areas of focus below.

### **Shared and Committed Leadership**

The principle of shared and committed leadership recognizes that all partners in education – including community partners, families, and students – are responsible for preparing students to live successfully in a diverse society. The Board will work with all educational partners to provide leadership that is responsive to the diverse nature of Ontario's communities by identifying and removing discriminatory biases and/or systemic barriers that impact student achievement, as well as student and staff well-being.

Supporting schools, staff and student success and bringing change to instructional practices and learning cultures requires strong, focused leadership from all Board staff, including school board trustees, directors of education, superintendents, principals, educators, support workers and business staff.

## School Community Relationships

The Board is committed to establishing and maintaining partnerships with diverse communities as part of the Board's broader commitment to include and recognize the perspectives and experiences of all students and to ensure that their needs are met.

The principle of equitable school community relationships recognizes the importance of consistent communication with families premised on trust, dignity, openness, respect and the recognition of the unique expression of individual identities. Regular consultation with members of diverse school communities helps to identify challenges and barriers experienced by students in schools.

## Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment Practices

The Board will review curriculum and resources, instruction, and assessment/evaluation practices in order to identify and address discriminatory biases to ensure equity of opportunity and access for each student, inclusive of all aspects of their intersectional identities and abilities.

The Board is committed to identifying and implementing inclusive, anti-oppressive curriculum planning processes supported by resources, instructional strategies and assessment and evaluation practices that reflect and respond to the diverse needs and abilities of diverse learners.

The principle of anti-oppressive and inclusive curriculum and assessment practices recognizes the importance of intentionally building [culturally responsive](#) classroom environments where students regularly and authentically have opportunities to share narratives, perspectives, curiosities, interests, and insights about their experiences of the world. Inclusive curriculum and assessment practices are also premised on responsive curriculum planning that begins with student interests, identities, abilities and successful learning experiences to guide inquiry and culturally responsive selection of resources to launch student inquiry.

Anti-oppressive and inclusive assessment practices are furthermore grounded in Overall and Specific Expectations of subject-specific curriculum documents, and assessment practices informed by [Learning for All](#) (2013) and the “seven fundamental principles of assessment, evaluation and reporting” as identified in [Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools](#) (2010, pg. 6).

## Religious Accommodation

The Board acknowledges each individual's right to follow or not follow religious or creed beliefs or practices free from discrimination or harassing behavior. The Peel District School Board, along with all Ontario public, Catholic and private schools, universities, colleges, and government and private organizations, has a legal duty to accommodate religious/creed accommodation request(s) from students and staff to the extent of undue hardship in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code.

The Board has established a process to respond to religious/creed accommodation to students and staff as outlined in the [Operating Procedure for Religious Accommodation](#) (COMS8) and that is consistent with the [principles of accommodation](#) established by the Ontario Human Rights Commission. The Board is committed to supporting religious/creed accommodation requests by engaging families in conversations in an environment of trust, openness, learning, and dignity, including the legal recognition of every individual's right to their own unique and intersectional expression of religious and creed identity.

## School Climate and the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment

Every person within the school community is entitled to anti-oppressive, safe, respectful and positive school climates for learning and working, free from all forms of bullying, discrimination harassment and hate. A safe, inclusive and accepting school climate is essential for student achievement and well-being. The school climate must welcome all stakeholders and encourage the active participation of students, families, and staff in ensuring that the principles of the *Code*, the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) and the [Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy](#) are applied in our schools, in addition to the guiding principles [Bill 13: Accepting Schools Act](#). The Board is committed to the intentional creation of learning and working climates that values and accepts all students, staff, and families, inclusive of their intersecting race and ethnicity; gender; gender identity; place of origin; citizenship; religion; creed; cultural and linguistic background; social and economic status; sexual orientation; age; ability/disability; and any other immutable characteristics.

## Professional Learning

The Board is 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 oppressive systemic barriers under the Ontario Human Rights Code. The groundwork for positive and sustained change throughout the Board is regular, long-term commitments to staff development focused on integrated and embedded anti-oppression practices as well as equity and inclusive education for Board employees from all levels and departments, including administration, and trustees .

## Accountability and Transparency

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

Approved February 23, 1988

Revised December 18, 1991

Revised April 27, 1993

Approved March 31, 1995 (*incorporates & replaces Policy 54 - Multiculturalism/Race Relations*)

Revised January 1, 1998 (*to reflect the change in Board name*)

Reviewed January 2000

Reviewed February 25, 2003

Reviewed December 2005

Approved August 24, 2010 (*replaces former Policy 54 - Antiracism & Ethno-cultural Equity*)

Revised November 13, 2018 (*replaces former Policy 54 – Equity and Inclusive Education*)