



EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Legal References:	<i>Ontario Human Rights Code;</i> <i>Education Act;</i> <i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.</i>
Related References:	Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2008
Effective Date:	<i>May 29, 2006</i>
Revisions:	<i>November 8, 2010</i>
Reviewed:	<i>September 15, 2014</i>

1. Preamble

- 1.1 The Waterloo Region District School Board is committed to the principles of equity through inclusive programs, curriculum, services, and operations in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Education Act, and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Board and its staff are committed to the elimination of all types of discrimination as outlined in *Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* (the "Strategy") and the Ontario Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119. The Board recognizes that equity of opportunity and equity of access to the full range of programs, the delivery of services, and resources are critical to the achievement of successful educational and social outcomes for those served by the school system as well as those who serve the system.
- 1.2 The Board values the contribution of all members of our diverse community of students, staff, parents, and community groups to our overall goal and key priorities. The Board supports the diversity of students, staff, and parents that make up the school community.
- 1.3 The Board's policies, procedures and practices will be developed, understood, implemented, and continually evaluated to ensure fair and equitable educational, social, and employment opportunities for students, staff and community partners. The Board will identify and remove systemic and attitudinal barriers and biases to learning and employment opportunities that have a discriminatory effect on any individual.

2. Areas of Focus

- 2.1 The Board will provide a safe, inclusive environment free from inequity, discrimination and harassment, by addressing the following eight major areas of focus:
 - 2.1.1 **POLICIES, PROGRAMS, GUIDELINES AND PRACTICES**

Serve staff, students, and families in diverse communities by incorporating the principles of equity and inclusive education into all aspects of its operations, structures, policies, programs, procedures, guidelines, and practices, consistent with the principles of the Code.

2.1.2 SHARED AND COMMITTED LEADERSHIP

Establishing a truly equitable and inclusive education system requires commitment from all levels. All partners in education, within the ministry, boards and schools, have a critical role to play in leading the identification and removal of bias, discrimination, and barriers to an inclusive education system.

2.1.3 SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

Establish and maintain collaborative relationships with diverse communities so that the perspectives and experiences of all students, families, and employees are recognized and addressed.

2.1.4 INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

Implement an inclusive curriculum and review resources, instruction, and assessment and evaluation practices in order to identify and address discriminatory biases so that each student may maximize her or his learning potential.

2.1.5 FAITH AND RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

Acknowledge each individual's right to follow or not to follow religious beliefs and practices, which shall be free from discriminatory or harassing behaviour. Commit to taking all reasonable steps to provide faith and religious accommodations to staff and students.

2.1.6 SCHOOL CLIMATE AND THE PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

Commit to the principle that every person within the school community is entitled to a respectful, positive school climate and learning environment, free from all forms of discrimination and harassment.

2.1.7 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Provide administrators, staff, students and other members of the school community with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviour needed to identify and eliminate discriminatory biases and systemic barriers under the Code.

2.1.8 ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Assess and monitor Board progress in implementing the "Strategy"; to embed the principles into all Board policies, programs, guidelines and practices; and to communicate these results to the community.