



## Equity and Inclusive Education

Board Received: January 29, 2018 Review Date: February 2022

### Accountability:

1. Frequency of Reports – as needed
2. Criteria for Success – consistent and fair practice in our schools  
– diverse communities feel comfortable and supported within Grand Erie

### Policy Statement:

The Grand Erie District School Board promotes the principles of equity and inclusive education, free of discriminatory biases and barrier-free. The Board values diversity within our school communities.

The Board recognizes that equity of access to the full range of programs, services, and resources is critical to the achievement of successful educational and social outcomes for those served by the school system. To that end, Grand Erie will implement strategies in accordance with the Ontario Education Equity Action Plan.

### Definitions:

**Diversity** – Diversity refers to the presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization or society. Dimensions include, but are not limited to, race, colour, creed, sexual orientation, age, ancestry, gender identity, disability, citizenship, family status, marital status, gender expression, sex, place of origin, and ethnicity.

**Equity** – Equity refers to a condition of fair, inclusive and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.

**Inclusive Education** – Inclusive education 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.

### Equity and Inclusive Education Implementation Strategy:

The Board has identified eight areas of focus which serve to honour diversity and commit to the principles of equity and inclusive education.

#### 1. **Programs, Guidelines and Practices**

Programs, guidelines and practices of the Board will serve students, staff 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 *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

**2. Shared and Committed Leadership**

The Board will foster development of leaders who demonstrate commitment to equity and inclusion, and include members of marginalized communities in shared leadership.

**3. School Community Relationships**

The Board will establish and maintain a collaborative relationship with diverse communities so that the perspectives and experiences of all students, families, and employees are valued and reflected in our practice.

**4. Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment Practices**

The Board will implement curricula in an inclusive manner and will review resources, instruction, and assessment and evaluation practices in order to identify, and raise awareness of, discriminatory biases so that each student may maximize their learning potential.

The Board will ensure that resources and instructional practices are respectful of the protected grounds of the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

**5. Religious Accommodation**

The Board acknowledges each individual's right to follow, or not to follow, religious beliefs and practices free from discriminatory or harassing behaviour and is committed to taking all reasonable steps to provide religious accommodations to staff and students.

The Board is committed to ensuring that appropriate religious accommodations are developed collaboratively in an environment founded in trust and mutual respect.

Religious accommodations could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Religious Holy Days and celebrations
- b. Opening and closing exercises
- c. Prayer
- d. Dietary requirements
- e. Fasting
- f. Religious attire
- g. Participation in daily activities and curriculum
- h. Scheduling for religious leaves
- i. Recruitment, job applications, and succession planning

**6. School Climate and the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment**

The Board is committed to the principle that every person within a school community is entitled to a respectful, positive school climate and learning environment free from all forms of discrimination and harassment. The Board will ensure that revisions to school codes of conduct include active consultation with diverse communities.

**7. Professional Learning**

The Board provides administrators, staff, students and other members of the school community with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviour needed to identify, and raise awareness of, discriminatory biases and systemic barriers. The Board encourages and supports staff and students in their efforts to promote social justice, equity, and anti-discrimination in schools and classrooms.

**8. Accountability and Transparency**

The Board assesses and monitors progress in implementing the principles of Equity and Inclusion into all Board policies, programs, guidelines and practices, and communicates these results to the community. The Board ensures that the principles of equity and inclusive education are embedded in school improvement plans, with particular emphasis on identifying and removing barriers to student achievement.

**9. Communication and Outreach**

This policy, and all related policies and procedures, will be communicated to parents/guardians, students, staff, and community members by all means possible.

All Grand Erie employees will be provided with information outlining policies and procedures related to Equity and Inclusive Education, in addition to training opportunities as they arise.

**Legislative and Policy Framework**

- *Guide to your rights and responsibilities under the Human Rights Code (2009)*
- *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (2009)*
- *Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation (2009)*
- *the Accepting Schools Act (2012)*
- *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario (2014)*
- *Ontario Education Equity Action Plan (2017)*