



## Equity and Inclusive Education

**Board Received:** May 26, 2014

**Review Date:** June 2017

### Accountability:

1. Frequency of Reports – as needed
2. Severity Threshold – as needed
3. Criteria for Success – consistent and fair practice in our schools  
– Diverse communities are comfortable and supported within Grand Erie

### Equity and Inclusive Education Implementation Strategy:

The Grand Erie District School 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. The Board has identified eight areas of focus which will serve to guide the Board and its schools in honouring diversity and committing to the principles of equity and inclusive education.

### Definitions:

**Diversity** – 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** – 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** – 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.

### Areas of Focus:

#### 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*.

Expectations:

1. Ensure that principles of equity and inclusive education are considered in all Board policies, programs, guidelines, operations, practices, and Board improvement plans.
2. Ensure all future policies, guidelines and practices are drafted and implemented in accordance with the Board's equity and inclusive education policy.
3. Provide support for school and system leaders to ensure that the principles of equity and inclusive education are embedded in all educational settings.

## 2. SHARED AND COMMITTED LEADERSHIP

The Board will provide and promote informed, shared leadership to improve student achievement and to close achievement gaps for students by identifying, addressing and removing all barriers and forms of discrimination.

Expectations:

1. Provide ongoing education for all staff, students and trustees that reflects comprehensive attention to the principles of human rights and their fundamental role in an equitable and inclusive environment.
2. Foster the development of leaders who prioritize and demonstrate commitment to the equity and inclusion initiatives.
3. Establish a collaborative culture which strives to include members of communities that are underserved and/or marginalized in the 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 recognized and addressed.

Expectations:

1. Review practices and strategies to assess educational stakeholders' views on school environment and establish processes to identify and address systemic barriers that limit or prevent opportunities within any sector of the school community.
2. Expand community outreach efforts to foster new partnerships that engage a cross-section of diverse students, parents, staff, community members and various community organizations, including business groups to foster and support an inclusive environment.
3. Invite and support representation of diverse groups on school and Board organizations and committees.

## 4. INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

The Board will implement an inclusive curriculum and will 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

Expectations:

1. Support schools in using classroom materials, teaching and learning strategies, as well as assessment, evaluation and reporting procedures to identify and address systemic bias that may exist.
2. Provide a learning environment that recognizes and supports a variety of learning styles found in students. Provide for consistent monitoring of the growth of students who are on Individual Education Plans and/or are English Language Learners in order to meet the specific needs of these students by removing barriers in instructional practice, assessment and evaluation. All needed accommodations and modifications must be in place to assist the student in accessing the curriculum.

3. Make certain that resources and instructional strategies respectful to the prohibited grounds of discrimination; show people of different races, genders, 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* (race, colour, creed, sexual orientation, age, ancestry, gender identity, disability, citizenship, family status, marital status, gender expression, sex, place of origin, and ethnicity) in society, the community, and the school.  
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## 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.

Expectations:

1. As a principle of our system, the Board is committed to fairness and equity in religious practice through removing any barriers and providing accommodations for cultural and religious practices.
2. The Board is committed to ensuring that appropriate religious accommodations are developed collaboratively in an environment founded in trust and mutual respect.
3. School staff will not be placed in a position of monitoring an individual's compliance with a religious obligation and enforcing such personal practices. This is not the responsibility of the school.
4. The Board identifies the following as possible areas for accommodation:
  - 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.

Expectations:

1. Implement strategies to identify and remove discriminatory barriers that limit engagement by students, parents, and the community.
2. Put procedures in place that will enable students to report incidents of discrimination and harassment safely to the principal and enable staff to report incidents of discrimination and harassment safely to the Board (*Grand Erie District School Board Policy HR 5 – Harassment; Grand Erie District School Board Policy SO10 – Bullying Prevention and Intervention; Grand Erie District School Board Policy SO11 – Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour* )
3. Ensure that revisions to school codes of conduct include the active consultation and involvement of students, staff, parents, and a representative cross-section of community members to address the needs of diverse communities.

## 7. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

The Board will 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.

Expectations:

1. Build staff capacity through ongoing professional learning.
2. Ensure that the principles of equity and inclusive education are shared, modeled and incorporated in professional learning programs.
3. Encourage and support staff and students in their efforts to promote social justice, equity, anti-racism, and anti-discrimination in schools and classrooms.

## 8. ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

The Board will assess and monitor ~~Board~~ progress in implementing the principles of Equity and Inclusion into all Board policies, programs, guidelines and practices, and to communicate these results to the community.

Expectations:

1. Actively communicate the equity and inclusive education policy to students, teachers, parents, staff, school councils, community partners, and volunteers.
2. Embed equity and inclusive education principles in Board and school improvement plans with particular emphasis on identifying and removing barriers to student achievement.

### **Communication and Outreach**

This procedure, related policies, and all related procedures will be communicated to parents/guardians, students, staff, and community members in the following ways:

- school agendas
- school newsletters
- Board website
- pamphlets delivered to parents/guardians
- introduction and review at school assemblies

All Grand Erie employees (present and new hires) 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)*
- *Guidelines on developing human rights policies and procedures (2008)*
- *PPM 119 – developing and implementing Equity and Inclusive Education policies in Ontario Schools (2009)*
- *Character Attributes*
- Tuition Agreement between Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) and The Grand Erie District School Board
- *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)*
- *Bill 13 (the Accepting Schools Act)*
- Policy SO14 – Equity and Inclusive Education