

EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION 3130

1. Rationale

Policy 3130, Equity and Inclusive Education and its related procedures outline the Simcoe County District School Board's (SCDSB) commitment to ensuring equitable and inclusive learning and working environments that uphold and reflect the following seven guiding principles of *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy 2009* - www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/equity.pdf.

1.1 Equity and inclusive education

1.1.1 is a foundation of excellence;

1.1.2 meets individual needs;

1.1.3 identifies and eliminates barriers;

1.1.4 promotes a sense of belonging;

1.1.5 involves the broader community;

1.1.6 builds on and enhances previous and existing initiatives; and,

1.1.7 is demonstrated throughout the system.

2. Policy Statement

It is the policy of the SCDSB to ensure an equitable and inclusive learning and working environment that upholds and reflects the seven guiding principles of *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy 2009*.

3. Definitions**3.1 Equity**

Equity is 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. (*Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy 2009*.)

3.2 Inclusive Education

Inclusive Education is based on the principle 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. (*Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy 2009*.)

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3.3 Diversity

Diversity is 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, race, language, physical and intellectual ability, religion, sex, sexual orientation and socio-economic status. (*Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy 2009.*)

3.4 Discrimination

Discrimination is unfair or prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups on the basis of grounds set out in the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, or on the basis of other similar factors.

3.5 Harassment

Harassment is defined in subsection 10(1) of the *Ontario Human Rights Code* as “engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome”.

4. Guidelines

The board regards the following areas of focus as important in an equitable and inclusive educational environment:

4.1 Board Policies, Programs, Guidelines and Practices

All board policies, programs, guidelines, and practices will serve employees, students, and families in all communities by incorporating the principles of equity and inclusive education into structures, policies, programs, procedures, guidelines, and practices, consistent with the principles of the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

4.2 Shared and Committed Leadership

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 to student achievement and well-being.

4.3 School - Community Relationships

The board will establish and maintain collaborative relationships with all communities so that the perspectives and needs of all students, families, and employees are recognized and addressed through shared and committed leadership and school-community relationships.

4.4 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.

The board will ensure the implementation of an inclusive curriculum supported by resources and instructional strategies and assessment and evaluation practices that reflect and respond to the need of the diversity of learners.

4.5 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 will take reasonable steps to provide religious accommodation to students and staff.

4.6 School and Workplace Climate and Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment

The board is committed to the principle that every person is entitled to work and/or learn in a respectful, positive working and learning environment, free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, and exclusion.

4.7 Professional Learning

The board will provide employees, students and other members of the SCDSB community, including parents/guardians, visitors, contractors, third parties and others, with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviour needed to identify and eliminate discriminatory biases and systemic barriers under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

4.8 Accountability and Transparency

The board will ensure that assessment and monitoring processes are in place to gauge the implementation of *Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* embedding these principles into all board policies, programs, guidelines and practices; and the communication of these results to the community.

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4.9 Indigenous Education

The board will create and nurture an academic environment for Indigenous students that promotes the development of a positive personal and cultural identity, as well as a sense of belonging to both Indigenous and wider communities. We acknowledge the diversity found in Indigenous communities and endorse learning about Indigenous cultures, histories and perspectives.

5. Administrative Procedures

The Director of Education is authorized to establish administrative procedures to implement this policy.

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