



EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

1.0 Rationale

District School Board Ontario North East (the Board) upholds the principles of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Constitution Act, 1982* and confirmed in the *Ontario Human Rights Code* (the Code). The Board and its staff are also committed to the elimination of all types of discrimination as outlined in *Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (The Strategy)* and the Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119.

District School Board Ontario North East is committed to ensuring all students reach their full potential through leadership rooted in inclusion, innovation and collaboration.

District School Board Ontario North East acknowledges that groups in our communities face systemic and individual biases that may be related to race, colour, culture, ethnicity, linguistic origin, disability, socio-economic class, age, ancestry, nationality, place of origin, religion, faith, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, family status, and/or marital status. District School Board Ontario North East also recognizes the unique biases faced by First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities.

District School Board Ontario North East recognizes that equity of opportunity and equity of access to the full range of programs, the delivery of services, and resources are critical to successful educational and social outcomes for all. To this end, the Board is committed to fairness, equity, and inclusive education as essential principles of the system. All Board policies, programs, operations, and practices will reflect these values.

District School Board Ontario North East values the contributions of diverse community members in strengthening educational opportunities for all students and ensuring a respectful, supportive, and welcoming learning and working environment for all students and employees.

2.0 Definitions

The Ministry of Education and District School Board Ontario North East recognize the following definitions for the purposes of this policy:

Diversity: 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 expression, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

Equity: 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.

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.

3.0 Policy

District School Board Ontario North East regards the following eight areas of focus as important in an equitable and inclusive education environment.

3.1 BOARD POLICIES, PROGRAMS, GUIDELINES AND PRACTICES

District School Board Ontario North East is committed to incorporating the principles of equity and inclusive education into all aspects of its operations, structures, policies, programs, procedures, guidelines, and practices. The Board is committed to the removal of systemic barriers to improve student learning, close achievement gaps, and to ensure equitable opportunities for students and staff. These commitments have been made actionable through the DSB1 Equity Action Plan. The impact of the Equity Action Plan will be reported on to the Board of Trustees on an annual basis.

3.2 SHARED AND COMMITTED LEADERSHIP

District School Board Ontario North East shall provide informed and committed leadership at all levels by assisting administrators, teachers, support staff, student leaders, trustees, and educational partners to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours required to implement this policy. District School Board Ontario North East is committed to building the capacity within leaders to improve student achievement and to close achievement gaps for students by identifying, addressing, removing, and preventing all forms of discrimination.

District School Board Ontario North East will identify a contact person to liaise with the Ministry and other boards to share challenges, informed practices, and resources.

3.3 SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

District School Board Ontario North East is committed to developing new relationships and building upon existing partnerships with diverse communities so that the perspectives and experiences of all students are acknowledged and valued. The Board recognizes that effective school-community partnerships enable representation and active participation from diverse communities and ensure the inclusion of many perspectives and experiences to enhance educational opportunities and equitable decision making.

3.4 INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

District School Board Ontario North East is committed to implementing an inclusive curriculum through the development and review of resources, delivery of instruction, and assessment and evaluation practices, in order to identify and address discriminatory biases so that students may maximize their learning. Staff will align their practices to recognize and support students with diverse backgrounds and differing abilities.

3.5 RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

District School Board Ontario North East acknowledges each individual's right to follow or not to follow religious and/or spiritual beliefs and practices free from discriminatory or harassing behaviour and is

committed to taking all reasonable steps to provide religious and faith-based accommodations to staff and students.

3.6 SCHOOL CLIMATE AND THE PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

District School Board Ontario North East is committed to the principle that every person within the school community is entitled to a respectful, positive, and inclusive working and learning environment, free from all forms of discrimination and harassment.

3.7 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

District School Board Ontario North East is committed to providing 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*.

3.8 ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Through regular review of Board and School Improvement Plans, Strategic Plans, Equity Action Plan and the Equity and Inclusive Education policy, District School Board Ontario North East is committed to assess and monitor the Board's progress in implementing and embedding the principles into all Board policies, programs, guidelines and practices. The Equity and Inclusive Education policy will be communicated to the community through the Board's website.