

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE 105

EQUITY & INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The Limestone District School Board believes that all students can learn and is committed to enabling each and every student to learn effectively, to reduce achievement gaps and to improve learning outcomes for all, regardless of race, class, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and other historical forms of marginalization.¹ The Board upholds the principles of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The Board and its staff are therefore committed to the elimination of all types of discrimination as outlined in *Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* and the Ontario Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 (2009). 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.

The Board is therefore committed to an equitable education system that upholds and reflects the principles of fair and inclusive education which should permeate all policies, programs, practices, and operations.

1.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES & PHILOSOPHIES

1.1 This procedure has been established to align and integrate the requirements of the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, Policy/Program No. 119 and the *Education and Inclusive Education Strategy* into all Board procedures, programs, and practices. Respect for the diverse perspectives of the entire school community will be reflected in all areas of the teaching, learning and administrative culture. Every effort will be made to identify and remove discriminatory biases and systemic barriers that may limit access to, and opportunity for, effective student engagement and achievement. The goal is to ensure that schools are inclusive and reflect the makeup of their diverse communities.

2.0 ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 *The Limestone District School Board is responsible for:*

- Ensuring that principles of equity and inclusive education permeate and are explicitly stated in all Board policies and procedures, programs, guidelines, operations, practices, and Board improvement plans.
- Providing training for school leaders and hiring managers to facilitate equitable recruitment and hiring practices to reflect Ontario's diverse society.
- Providing opportunities for the diverse school community, including students, staff, parents, trustees and community members, to provide active input, as appropriate, into

¹ The Ontario Human Rights Code identifies the following prohibited discrimination grounds: race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed (religion), sex (includes gender identity and pregnancy), sexual orientation, age, record of offences, marital status, family status, and/or disability (includes perceived disability). (From *Human Rights at Work, Third Edition*, p 14)

Board procedures and improvement plans on an ongoing basis. (For example, School Climate Surveys).

- Providing ongoing education and training for students, staff and trustees in implementing equity and inclusive education and leadership initiatives.
- Reviewing committees to assess the levels of representation of the diversity of the Board and the wider community.
- Reviewing student assessment and evaluation practices to identify and address bias that may exist in the way student's work is assessed and evaluated in order to reduce the achievement gap. The principles of such a review will be consistent with the *Code*.
- Providing religious and creed accommodation for students and staff consistent with the *Code*. (See Procedure 106)
- Implementing strategies to identify and remove discriminatory barriers that limit engagement by students, parents, and the community, so that diverse groups and the broader community have Board-level representation and access to Board initiatives.
- Establishing procedures that enable students and staff to report incidents of discrimination and harassment safely and that enable the Board to respond in a timely and effective manner.
- Reporting on its goals and progress in the implementation of the equity and inclusive education strategy and its impact on students achievement.

2.2 *Schools are responsible for:*

- Ensuring that the school procedures and practices (ex. School code of conduct; instructional strategies and assessment) include the principles of equity and inclusive education.
- Implementing Board equity and inclusive education procedures and programs and school improvement plans that are consistent with the *Code* and reflect the needs of their diverse students and school communities.
- Promoting equity minded student leadership related to issues of social justice.
- Ensuring that community partnerships and school committees reflect the diversity of the broader community.
- Reviewing student assessment and evaluation practices to identify and address bias that may exist in the way student's work is assessed and evaluated in order to reduce the achievement gap. The principles of such a review will be consistent with the *Code*.
- Reviewing resources and instructional strategies to align with the principles of equity and inclusive education.

- Implementing the religious and creed accommodation practices to align with the Board's religious accommodation guideline.
- Building staff capacity through ongoing professional learning.
- Supporting initiatives which promote a welcoming and respectful school environment and providing timely and specific feedback that will further school-wide equitable practices.

2.3 *Students are responsible for:*

- Practicing the principles of equity and inclusion and adhering to the School Code of Conduct which work together promote a welcoming and respectful school environment.

3.0 **APPLICATION**

3.1 This procedure applies to all Board staff, students, parent/guardians, Trustees, volunteers and the broader school community.

4.0 **UNRESOLVED ISSUES**

4.1 Despite the Board's commitment to accommodate, an individual may feel that an inequity has occurred. The Board will take reasonable and timely steps to address any unresolved issues raised by an affected person which could include dispute resolution mechanisms.

4.2 The Board recognizes, and is committed to, the values of freedom from discriminatory or harassing behaviour based on religion through its human rights procedure, equity and inclusive education procedure, safe schools procedure, and curriculum documents. All of these will be informed by, and interpreted in accordance with, the principles of the *Code*.

Legal References:

Canadian Criminal Code

Education Act

Ontario Human Rights Code

Ontario Occupational Health & Safety Act Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

The Constitution Act, 1982

Ontario Human Rights Commission - Policy on preventing discrimination based on Creed

Related Procedures:

Bullying and Violence Prevention: Human Rights Education

Discrimination, Harassment & Human Rights Violations Respect in the Workplace: Anti-Harassment and Discrimination

Violence in the Workplace

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