



Equity and Inclusive Education #200.23

Adopted:	November 23, 2010
Last Reviewed/Revised:	February 28, 2023
Responsibility:	Superintendent of Education
Next Scheduled Review:	June 2027

Policy Statement

The Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board (the “Board”) recognizes that all people are created equal, in the image of God, each with unique characteristics deserving of dignity (Genesis: 1:27). In accordance with the Church’s teachings, it is the policy of the Board to provide in all its operations an educational environment which supports and enables diversity within our inclusive Catholic community.

The Board recognizes that any form of social or cultural discrimination is incompatible with the Catholic faith’s moral principles and is in violation of the Ontario Human Rights Code (“the Code”). The Board recognizes that the school system gives primacy to the teachings of the Catholic faith, congruent with the protection afforded in the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Constitution Act, 1982 and confirmed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Board seeks an environment free from harassing and discriminatory behaviour, where all members of the community feel safe, welcomed, and accepted. The Board seeks an environment free from harassing and discriminatory behaviour, where all members of the community feel safe, welcomed, and accepted.

The Board and its staff are committed to the elimination of discrimination as outlined in Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and the Ontario Ministry of Education (the “Ministry”) Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119, in a manner which is consistent with the exercise of the Board’s denominational rights under section 93 of the Constitution Act, 1982 and as recognized in section 19 of the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Application and Scope

The Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board is committed to serving the staff, students and families in its diverse Catholic community by incorporating the principles of equity and inclusive education into all aspects of its policies, programs, procedures and practices that are consistent with Catholic denominational rights. By identifying removing and preventing systemic barriers and discriminatory practices student will be able to realize their full potential thus improving student achievement.

Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation, Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and Policy/Program Memorandum No.119 (2009) “Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools” identify eight areas of focus for implementing equity and inclusive education.

In accordance with the above documents, as well as applicable legislation that outlines the denominational rights of the Catholic school system, and with adherence to the Guiding Principles of the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, consistent with the Code, and in the context of each area of focus, the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board shall:

1.0 Board Policies, Programs, Procedures and Practices:

- Ensure that general principles of equity and inclusive education are explicitly stated in all Board policies, programs, curriculum, guidelines, operations, practices, and Board Improvement Plans.
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- Provide opportunities for the diverse Catholic school community, including students, staff, parents, trustees and community members, to provide active input into Board policies and improvement plans on an ongoing basis.
- Ensure that staff will investigate in a thorough and timely manner any claims of discrimination and/or racism and take appropriate action consistent with the principles of the Code.
- Develop and implement strategies to actively engage students, parents, families and the wider community in the review, development, and implementation of initiatives to support and promote equity and inclusive education.



- Ongoing collection and analysis of data on racism and experience of discrimination in order to address systemic barriers, monitor progress and measure impact.

2.0 Shared and Committed Leadership:

- Establish and maintain partnerships with all members of our diverse Catholic community so that the perspectives and experiences of all students are recognized and their needs are met.
- Ensure that members of communities that are underserved and/or marginalized are included in the shared leadership.
- Establish a collaborative culture where the collective capabilities and voices of stakeholders are used to develop and implement equity and inclusive education goals.
- Promote equity minded student leadership related to issues of social justice in the tradition of the Catholic Church.

3.0 School-Community Relationships:

- Collaborate with students, parents, staff and other Catholic community partners to create and sustain a positive school climate reflective of Catholic values that support student achievement.
- Examine and remove any barriers that exist that are part of systemic discrimination under the Code and that prevent full participatory school-community relations.
- Establish and maintain partnerships with all members of our diverse Catholic community so that the perspectives and experiences of all students, families, and employees are recognized.
- Establish processes to identify and address systemic barriers that limit or prevent all sectors of the school community from benefiting from enhanced opportunities for Board representation and greater access to Board initiatives.
- Identify under-represented communities and facilitate their participation and involvement in Board activities.

4.0 Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment Practices:

- In an effort to address any achievement gaps, staff will review student assessment and evaluation policies and practices to identify and address systemic bias that may exist in the way students' work is assessed and evaluated. The principles of such a review will be consistent with the Code; and
- Support the schools' review of classroom strategies that promote school-wide equity and inclusive education policies and practices specifically addressing areas of social and cultural discrimination.

5.0 Religious Accommodation:

- Support freedom of religion and an individual's right to manifest his/her religious beliefs and observances. The right to freedom of religion, however, is not absolute and religious accommodation in the Board is carried out in the larger context of the Catholic education system and denominational rights of Catholic schools.
- Seek to accommodate an individual's right to freedom of religion in a manner that not only respects the individual's beliefs, but the principles of the Catholic Church.
- Ensure that an appropriate space or classroom, other than the chapel, is available for religious celebrations celebrated by other Christian denominations or other faith traditions.
- Consult with their respective local Ordinary on such accommodations.

6.0 School Climate and the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment:

- Create a climate in which excellence is continually strived for and respect for all permeates the environment.
- Ensure that codes of conduct are revised to address all forms of racism, discrimination, and harassment.
- Ensure the use of progressive discipline is consistent across the district. Progressive discipline is both supportive and corrective and considers mitigating and other factors.

7.0 Professional Learning:

- Support the school's review of classroom strategies that promote school-wide equity and inclusive education policies and practices.
- Allocate adequate resources to provide ongoing opportunities for students, administrators, teachers, support staff and trustees to participate in equity and inclusive education training and leadership initiatives.
- Provide ongoing anti-racism and anti-discrimination training that examines power and privilege, including training and prevention and early intervention strategies. This training should include information on cross-cultural



differences as well as exceptionalities and disabilities and strategies to mitigate disciplinary practices.

- Identify a board equity and inclusive education contact to liaise with the Ministry of Education and other boards in order to share challenges, promising practices and resources.

8.0 Accountability and Transparency:

- Embed the principles of equity and inclusive education into the Board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan, Board Improvement and Equity Plan and all Board policies, programs, guidelines and practices.
- Communicate the equity and inclusive education policy to students, teachers, parents, staff, Catholic Parent Involvement Committees, community partners, and volunteers and post it on the Board's website.
- Engage Board and school teams in school improvement planning.
- Establish processes to monitor progress and assess effectiveness of policies, programs and procedures.
- Report on the progress of implementation of the policy and its impact on student achievement using specific criteria.

References

- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms: <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/charter/>
- Constitution Act, 1982: http://www.solon.org/Constitutions/Canada/English/ca_1982.html
- Ontario Human Rights Code: http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90h19_e.htm
- Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy
- Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 (2009) - Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools
- Policy/Program Memorandum No. 108 - Opening or Closing Exercises in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools
- Opening and Closing Exercises Administrative Procedure 200.11
- Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan
- **Student Behaviour, Discipline and Safety 200.09**
- **Student Behaviour, Discipline and Safety 200.09 - District Code of Conduct**
- Ontario Anti-racism Action Plan 2020
- Covid Recovery Act 2020

Definitions

Bias: Prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.

Implicit Bias: Bias as a product of associations learned through past experiences.

Explicit Stereotypes: Consciously endorsed, intentional, and sometimes controllable thoughts and beliefs.

Equity: A condition or state of fair, inclusive and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating all 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.

Ontario Human Rights Code ("the Code"): A provincial law that gives everyone equal rights and opportunities, without discrimination, in specific areas such as education, jobs, housing, and services. The goal of the Code is to address and ultimately prevent discrimination and harassment (available at www.ohrc.on.ca).

Religious Accommodation: An obligation under the Ontario Human Rights Code to provide reasonable accommodation for students and employees who wish to observe the tenets or practices of their faith, as well as for those who wish not to participate in any form of religious observance.