

# GLOSSARY

*The following are key terms in the area of equity pertinent to this document.*

## **Aboriginal Peoples**

The Indigenous Peoples (the original inhabitants) of Canada and their descendants. Aboriginal peoples include the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada.

## **Accountability**

Refers to the process whereby organizations and institutions as members of a diverse community are subject to the obligation to maintain a certain level of ethics and responsiveness and reporting regarding the quality, effectiveness and relevance of their service or practices and the method of delivery.

Refer to: Strengthening Hamilton's Community Initiative, *Anti-Racism Framework*, 2003.

## **Annual System Initiatives**

Priorities established by The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board for each school year.

## **Anti-classism and Socio-economic Equity**

Akin to antiracism, the principles of Anti-classism and Socio-economic Equity strive to ameliorate the effects of classism and discrimination based upon socio-economic status. Specifically, Anti-classism and Socio-economic Equity initiatives attempt to provide equality of outcome by removing barriers impeding access to goods and services for marginalized socio-economic groups.

## **Antiracism Education**

An approach to education that integrates the perspectives and knowledges of Indigenous Peoples and racial, ethnic, cultural and religious groups into an educational system and its practices. The aim of antiracism education is the elimination of racism in all its forms. Antiracism education seeks to identify and change educational policies, procedures, and practices that foster racism, as well as the racist attitudes and behaviour that underlie and reinforce such policies and practices. Antiracism education provides teachers and students with the knowledge and skills to examine racism critically in order to understand how it originates and to identify and respond to it.

## **At-Risk Students**

The Chairs of the Expert Panels on Students at Risk in *Building Pathways to Success: The Report of the Program Pathways for Students at Risk Work Group*, Toronto, 2003 defined At-Risk students as:

- Elementary students who are performing at level 1, or below grade expectations;
- Secondary students who would have studied at the Modified or Basic level in the previous curriculum;
- Secondary students who are performing significantly below the provincial standard, earning marks in the 50s and low 60s and who do not have the foundations to be successful in the new curriculum;
- Students who are disengaged, with very poor attendance;

Committee would like to add "Students at-risk of not graduating or successfully entering the workplace" to the Ministry definition above.

## **Barriers**

Barriers are policies, procedures or practices that prevent equality of access and outcome. They can be both systemic and individual.

## **Best Practice**

A best practice is “a working method or set of working methods, which is officially accepted as being the best to use in a particular business or industry, usually described in detail.

Refer to: *Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary*

## **Bias**

An inaccurate, limited and fixed view of the world, or of a given situation, individuals or groups. A bias against or towards members of a particular racial, ethnic, cultural, or religious group can be expressed through speech, nonverbal behaviour and written and other media.

## **Class**

Relative social rank in terms of income, wealth, status and/or power.

Refer to: M. Adams, L. Bell, P. Griffin, *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook* New York, 1997.

## **Classism**

Practices and beliefs that place different value (worth) on people because of their socio-economic class, and an economic system that creates inequality between socio-economic groups.

Refer to: Peel District School Board's *Go Beyond Words*

## **Community Consultation**

A formal or informal dialogue with the community.

## **Community Partnerships**

Collaborative relationships between institutions and groups within the community in which there is recognition of the experience of participants and evidence of their involvement in the decision making of the institutions.

## **Counselling/Guidance/Support Services**

The process whereby skilled and informed persons assist in the resolution of difficulties and/or choosing of options which are in the best interests of an individual or group.

## **Cultural Identity**

Cultural identity refers to (a) the collective self-awareness that a given group embodies and reflects (e.g. racial, ethnic, gender groups) and (b) the “identity of the individual in relation to his or her culture”.

Refer to: Carl E. James, *Seeing Ourselves: Exploring Race, Ethnicity and Culture*, Toronto, Canada, 1995.

## **Culture**

Culture is the totality of ideas, beliefs, values, knowledge, and way of life of a group of people who share a certain historical background. Manifestations of culture include art, laws, institutions, and customs. Culture changes continually and, as a result, often contains elements of conflict and opposition.

Refer to: Ministry of Education, *Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation*, 1993.

**Curriculum**

Curriculum encompasses all learning experiences the student will have in school. These include school environment, interactions among students, staff and the community, and the values, attitudes and behaviours conveyed by the school.

**Discrimination**

The unequal treatment of non-dominant groups or individuals, either by a person a group or an institution with dominant identity which, through the denial of certain rights, results in inequality, subordination and/or deprivation of political, educational, social economic and cultural rights.

Refer to: Fran Endicott and Alok Mukherjee, *A Glossary of Terms*.

**Early School Leavers**

Colloquially known as “dropouts”, Early School Leavers are students who have ceased to attend secondary school without achieving an Ontario Secondary School Diploma, Ontario Secondary School Certificate or Certificate of Accomplishment.

**Employment Equity**

A program designed to remove systemic barriers to equality of outcome in employment by identifying and eliminating discriminatory policies and practices, remedying the effects of past discrimination, and ensuring appropriate representation of designated groups. Employment equity programs usually involve setting goals and timelines in order to ensure that defined objectives are met by a specified date.

**Equity**

Equity refers to right of individuals to an equitable share of the goods and services in society. In order to ensure equality of access and outcome, equity programs may treat groups differently when the situation in society precludes equal treatment. Equity programs are designed to identify and eliminate barriers to equality. Often, Equity programs are more inclined to accept the priority of collective rights over individual rights.

Refer to: Strengthening Hamilton’s Community Initiative, *Anti-Racism Framework, 2003* and Ministry of Education, *Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation, 1993*.

**Ethnic**

Pertaining to ethnicity.

**Ethnicity**

Like race, is socially, politically and historically constructed, and is subject to the ambiguities and contradictions that are to be found in societies. It is dynamic. Its meanings change over time. Nevertheless, ethnicity serves to establish status allocation, role expectations and group membership.

Refer to: Carl E. James, *Seeing Ourselves: Exploring Race, Ethnicity and Culture*, Toronto, 1995.

**Ethnocultural Group**

A group of people who share a particular cultural heritage or background. Every Canadian belongs to an ethnic group. Refer to terms ethnicity and culture.

**Eurocentric Curriculum**

A curriculum that focuses primarily on the experiences and achievements of people of European background. Such a curriculum inevitably marginalizes the experiences and achievements of people of other backgrounds.

## **First Languages**

A person's native language or mother tongue.

Refer to: *The Oxford Canadian Dictionary*, 1998

### **Gender (Draft Definition)**

**Those characteristics of women and men that are socially constructed. Sex refers to those characteristics of males and females that are biologically determined.**

**Refer to: *Shaping A Culture Of Respect In Our Schools*, Ontario Safe Schools Action Team, 2008**

### **Gender-based Violence (Draft Definition)**

**Any form of behaviour – including psychological, physical, and sexual behaviour – that is based on an individual's gender and is intended to control, humiliate, or harm the individual. This form of violence is generally directed at women, girls, and transgender persons and is based on an attitude or prejudice, which can be conscious or unconscious and which exists on the individual and institutional level, that aims to subordinate an individual or group on the basis of sex and/or gender identity.**

**(Adapted from Peter Jaffe and Ray Hughes, "Preventing Violence against Girls", *Education Forum* 34[3] [Fall 2008] [Toronto: OSSTF/FEESO])**

### **Gender Identity (Draft Definition)**

Gender Identity is linked to an individual's intrinsic sense of self and, particularly the sense of being male or female. Gender identity may or may not conform to a person's birth assigned sex. The personal characteristics that are associated with gender identity include self-image, physical and biological appearance, expression, behaviour and conduct, as they relate to gender.

Refer to: [Policy on Discrimination and Harassment because of Gender Identity](#) Ontario Human Rights Commission

## **Heterosexism**

Heterosexism is used to refer to the assumption that everyone is heterosexual. This definition is often used in the context of discrimination against bisexual, lesbian and gay people that is less overt, and which may be unintentional and unrecognized by the person or organization responsible for the discrimination. It can also be useful in understanding and identifying some kinds of institutional or societal bias, although homophobia may also be at play.

Refer to: *the Ontario Human Rights Code (2005). Part I - The Context: Sexual Orientation, Human Rights Protections, Case Law and Legislation. Policy on Sexual Orientation*

## **Homophobia**

Homophobia is the fear and hatred of lesbians and gay men, or any behaviour that falls outside of perceived traditional gender roles. Homophobic acts may include but are not limited to name-calling, shunning/exclusion and the promotion of hatred and violence targeting lesbian and gay individuals and/or groups.

## **Indigenous Knowledges**

The knowledges of the first founding peoples that have been shared through an oral tradition.

## **Indigenous Peoples**

First founding peoples.

**Indigenous Perspectives**

The view of Indigenous peoples as influenced by their knowledges, values, traditions and historical experiences.

**Leadership**

The Board of Trustees, Senior Administration and any person placed in a position of added responsibility within The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board.

**Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Persons or Communities**

This terminology is used throughout the document to identify individuals or communities that are not heterosexual in orientation or that identify themselves based on their gender identities. It is intended to be inclusive.

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**Minority Knowledges/Perspectives**

The knowledges/perspectives of minority groups that have historically been silenced and marginalized.

**Outcome**

A result or visible effect.

Refer to: *The Oxford Canadian Dictionary*, 1998

**Personal Needs**

Physical, emotional, social, interpersonal, and spiritual needs.

**Prejudice**

A frame of mind which tends to pre-judge a person, or a group, in a negative light. This negative judgment is usually without adequate evidence. These negative attitudes are frequently not recognized as unsoundly based assumptions because of the frequency with which they are repeated. They become common sense notions which are widely accepted and are used to justify acts of discrimination.

Refer to: Strengthening Hamilton's Community Initiative, *Anti-Racism Framework*, 2003.

**Race**

Race is a social category used to classify humankind according to common ancestry or descent and reliant upon differentiation by general physical characteristics such as a colour or skin and eyes, hair type, stature and facial features. There is no scientific evidence for race. It is socially constructed.

Refer to: Strengthening Hamilton's Community Initiative, *Anti-Racism Framework*, 2003.

**Racism**

Racism represents a set of ideologies, beliefs and learnings that implies, justifies, and asserts the superiority of one social group over another on the basis of physical and cultural characteristics. It comprises **prejudice**, (including ethnocentrism and stereotypes) and **discrimination**. These components, which contribute to the totality of racism as an ideology and practice are used by the dominant groups to perpetuate, justify, and legitimize its power and thereby establish **a power relationship**. Once power is institutionalized, racism becomes **systemic**.

Refer to: Strengthening Hamilton's Community Initiative, *Anti-Racism Framework*, 2003.

**Register**

Each of several forms of a language (colloquial, formal, literary, etc.) usually used in particular circumstances.

Refer to: *The Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, 1998.

**Sex (Draft Definition)**

Sex refers to a person's genetic or anatomical sex; there are also associated psychological and behavioural norms related to a person's sex.

Refer to: Towards A Commission Policy on Gender Identity Ontario Human Rights Commission

**Sexual Orientation**

Sexual Orientation is more than simply a "status" that an individual possesses; it is an immutable personal characteristic that forms part of an individual's core identity. Sexual Orientation encompasses the range of human sexuality from gay and lesbian to bisexual and heterosexual orientations.

Refer to: *Ontario Human Rights Commission Policy on Discrimination and Harassment because of Sexual Orientation*

**Sexism (Draft Definition)**

Sexism stems from a set of implicit or explicit beliefs, erroneous assumptions and actions based upon an ideology of inherent superiority of one gender over another and may be evident within organizational or institutional structures or programs, as well as within individual thought or behaviour patterns. Sexism is any act or institutional practice, backed by institutional power which subordinates people because of gender. While, in principle, sexism may be practiced by either gender, most of our societal institutions are still the domain of men and usually the impact of sexism is experienced by women.

Refer to: Canadian Race Relations Federation

**Socio-economic Status**

Socio-economic Status refers to the relative position of a family or individual on a hierarchical social structure based on their access to or control of wealth, prestige and power.

Refer to: J. Doug Wilms, *Vulnerable Children*, 2002, pg. 337.

**Socio-economically Marginalized Communities**

Socio-economically Marginalized Communities are communities whose members have incomes barely or insufficient to meet basic human needs.

Refer to: M. Adams, L. Bell, P. Griffin, *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook* New York, 1997.

**Stakeholders**

Persons employed by the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board and those individuals who have a vested interest.

**Staff**

Any person employed by the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board.

**Stereotype** *(Draft Definition)*

A fixed mental picture or image of a group of people, ascribing the same characteristic(s) to all members of the group, regardless of their individual differences. An over-generalization, in which the information or experience on which the image is based may be true for some of the individual group members, but not for all members. Stereotyping may be based upon misconceptions, incomplete information and/or false generalizations about race, age, ethnic, linguistic, geographical or natural groups, religions, social, marital or family status, physical, developmental or mental attributes, gender or sexual orientation.

Refer to Canadian Race Relations Federation

**Transgender** *(Draft Definition)*

Transgender describes individuals who are not comfortable with, or who reject, in whole or in part, their birth assigned gender identities. The word Transgender is generally viewed as an umbrella term that unifies people who identify as transsexual, transgenderist, intersexed, transvestite or as a cross-dresser.

Refer to: Policy on Discrimination and Harassment because of Gender Identity Ontario Human Rights Commission

**Transphobia** *(Draft Definition)*

Transphobia is the unrealistic or irrational fear and hatred of cross-dressers, transsexuals and transgenderists. Like all prejudices, it is based on negative stereotypes and misconceptions that are then used to justify and support hatred, discrimination, harassment, and violence toward people who are Transgender.

Refer to: Policy on Discrimination and Harassment because of Gender Identity Ontario Human Rights Commission

**Working Poor**

The working poor are a socio-economic group who live at or below the Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) established by Statistics Canada to designate a family or individual with a low-income as compared to other members of the community. For families, the LICO is set at the level at which a family spends 20% more of their pre-tax income on food, shelter and clothing than the average family in their community would spend on those necessities. The LICO is commonly known as the “poverty line”.