

Anti-Classism and Socio-Economic Equity Procedure

RATIONALE:

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) is committed to the principles of equity through inclusive programs, curriculum, services, and operations, in accordance with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Education Act.

TERMINOLOGY:

Anti-classism and Socio-economic Equity: Akin to antiracism, the principles of Anti-classism and Socio-economic Equity strive to eliminate 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.

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

Classism: The cultural, institutional and individual set of practices and beliefs that assign value to people according to their socioeconomic status, thereby resulting in differential treatment.

Culture: The way in which people live, think and define themselves as a community.

Early School Leavers: An early school leaver is a youth between the ages of 14-21 (age range is ideal, not rigid) who has left an Ontario high school, (dropped out or permanently expelled) prior to receiving their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) and has not returned to any form of high school education to receive their high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED).

Minority Knowledges/Perspectives: The knowledges/perspectives of minority groups that have historically been silenced and marginalized.

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.

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

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 per cent 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.”

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PROCEDURES:

HWDSB is committed to:

1.0 Policies, Guidelines and Practices

Commitment to Equity

- 1.1 Ensuring that all policies, guidelines and operating practices actively demonstrate a respect for the principles of anti-classism and socio-economic equity.
- 1.2 Clearly articulating, through existing and new policies, guidelines and operating practices, a commitment to socio-economic equity.
- 1.3 Establishing practices and procedures that will ensure compliance with the policy and guidelines of anti-classism and socio-economic equity and ensure the Equity Policy and Supporting Guidelines: Anti-classism and Socio-economic Equity is accessible to all employees, students, parents, and the community at large.
- 1.4 Continuing to acknowledge the needs addressed by the Compensatory Education program and that:
 - Not all school communities are equal in their ability to support their students;
 - Schools can make a difference in overcoming the education effects of a disadvantaged community;
 - Senior and school administrations are to be encouraged and supported in their efforts to
 - Provide additional support and consideration to identified schools.

Accountability

- 1.5 Establishing a review process to monitor and assess the effectiveness of community consultation, partnership and involvement in the application of the Equity Policy and Supporting Guidelines: Anti-classism and Socio-economic Equity.

2.0 Leadership

Commitment to Equity

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- 2.1 Providing leadership at all levels that fosters an environment of respect for all people regardless of socio-economic status.
- 2.2 Raising awareness of anti-classism and socio-economic equity throughout the Board through its leaders.

Accountability

- 2.3 Ensure that anti-classism and socio-economic equity are part of the Strategic Directions and will provide opportunities for implementation of equity education as it pertains to anti-classism and socio-economic equity by developing implementation plans to provide inclusive social and academic school environments for all students.

Removal of Barriers

- 2.4 Identifying and removing inequities and barriers related to the System, School and Service Improvement Planning process, as well as employment practices and salaries.

3.0 School Community Partnership

Commitment to Equity

- 3.1 Recognizing that schools consist of different socio-economic communities and will foster open dialogue and open partnerships with parents and community groups within the school and community.

Removal of Barriers

- 3.2 Promoting active participation with the community and will identify and address barriers related to socio-economic status that interfere with community participation in events.
- 3.3 Ensuring schools have an understanding and sensitivity to their school communities about financial requests for school trips, extracurricular activities and fundraising.

Cultural Interpretation

- 3.4 Recognizing the language needs of all the members of the school community. Language translation and cultural interpretive services will be used to facilitate first language communication when there is inadequate comprehension of official languages.

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- 3.5 Ensuring that open channels of communication exist to enable community representatives from the diverse school community to be involved in the development, implementation, application and review of the Board's policies.
- 3.6 Making sure that each school staff and school council encourages community contribution and participation in planning events and extracurricular activities for schools.

4.0 Curriculum

Commitment to Equity

- 4.1 Addressing the learning needs of students from working poor and socio-economically marginalized communities who are disadvantaged by classism in the existing curriculum.
- 4.2 Endeavouring to deliver program, provide learning materials and best practices in all subject areas that reflect a balance of perspectives and include a diversity of experiences reflecting working poor and socio-economically marginalized communities.
- 4.3 Ensuring that teachers have access to varied resources, which value and respect the contributions, experiences, and histories of working poor and socio-economically marginalized communities.

Staff Development

- 4.4 Providing teachers with training to examine teaching materials for discriminatory bias related to classism and socio-economic status in existing learning materials, programs, or practices. This training will enable teachers to promote critical thinking skills about classism and to challenge bias and stereotypical assumptions based on socioeconomic status.

5.0 Student Languages

Commitment to Equity

- 5.1 Respecting and valuing all cultures and languages.
- 5.2 Not seeking to replace its students' home languages, but rather striving to develop the English language capacities of all its students.
- 5.3 Providing specialized programming and enriched English language opportunities that will allow students the opportunity to reach their full academic potential.

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- 5.4 Teaching practices that recognize the existence and appropriate use of different dialects and registers of English. However, Standard English will be regarded as the register of the formal curriculum.

Cultural Interpretation

- 5.5 Endeavouring, when possible, to communicate with students and their parents in their first language. It will also communicate in a jargon-free form of English.

6.0 Student Assessment, Evaluation, Reporting and Placement

Commitment to Equity

- 6.1 Having the same high expectations for all its students. It will ensure that working poor and socio-economically marginalized students' potentials are not underestimated based on bias and stereotypical assumptions related to socio-economic status. They will have opportunities to participate in programs that reflect their highest potential.
- 6.2 Placement and programming practices that are free of classism; will take into account the students' previous education and personal experiences, and will be designed to meet the needs of the individual student.
- 6.3 Working to provide appropriate, multifaceted and bias free evaluation, reporting and assessment.

Removal of Barriers

- 6.4 Endeavouring to identify discriminatory barriers that prevent working poor and socio-economically marginalized students from reaching their academic potential and will demonstrate an effort to eliminate these barriers.
- 6.5 Ensuring that parents and guardians are provided with the information required to make decisions regarding program and placement procedures.

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7.0 Counseling/Guidance/Support Services

Removal of Barriers

- 7.1 Ensuring that the potential of students from working poor and socio-economically marginalized communities will not be underestimated; HWDSB will provide counselling/guidance/support services free of bias and stereotypical assumptions based on socio-economic status.
- 7.2 Providing counselling/guidance/support services that encourage students from working poor and socio-economically marginalized communities to explore career options that have traditionally excluded them.

Commitment to Equity

- 7.3 Putting into place proactive strategies and/or programs to identify At-Risk Students, from working poor and socio-economically marginalized communities, and to encourage their continued attendance at school. In addition, HWDSB will put into place strategies to support school re-entry for Early School Leavers.
- 7.4 Mobilizing Board and Community resources to assist students from working poor and socio-economically marginalized communities in reaching their full potential.

Cultural Interpretation

- 7.5 Providing communication strategies, which may include cultural and language interpretation services, to facilitate parent/guardian involvement in students' academic achievement, social and emotional development, discipline, and future direction.

8.0 HARASSMENT

Staff

- 8.1 Applying its Harassment Policy for reporting, responding to and resolving incidents of harassment based on classism and socio-economic status. Every individual has the right to report harassment without fear of reprisal and every complaint will be investigated confidentially in order to protect the rights of all individuals.

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Students

- 8.2 Applying its Safe Schools Policy when the principles of Anti-classism and Socio-economic equity are not respected.

Community

- 8.3 Ensuring that a process for addressing harassment based on socio-economic status, particularly towards members of the working poor and socio-economically marginalized community is implemented and that a process of accountability is in place for all trustees, employees, parents, volunteers, students and the community at large.

Staff Development

- 8.4 Providing all staff with professional development opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills to effectively identify and respond to harassment based on socio-economic status.

9.0 Employment Practices

- 9.1 Endeavouring to provide recruitment, interview, selection, training, placement, and promotion practices and procedures that are inclusive and that do not discriminate based on socio-economic status.
- 9.2 Attempting to provide interview teams that have an understanding and sensitivity towards classism and socio-economic equity.
- 9.3 Procedures for progressive discipline, performance appraisal, review and reporting that are as free as possible from bias and stereotypical assumptions based on socio-economic status.

10.0 Staff Development

System Level

- 10.1 Making available staff development programs that enable staff to identify and challenge biases, stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination based on classism and socio-economic status.
- 10.2 Providing staff with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to teach, work and learn from a perspective that is free from classism and to challenge bias and stereotypical assumptions based on socio-economic status.

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- 10.3 Creating staff development initiatives that will allow its employees to identify and examine bias and stereotypical assumptions based on socioeconomic status as it relates to evaluation, reporting, assessment and placement.

School Level

- 10.4 Providing additional, focused staff development in schools that have been identified as having specific needs based on the socioeconomic demographics of its catchment area.