

Anti-Racism and Ethnocultural 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:

Aboriginal Peoples: The descendants of the original inhabitants of North America. Section 35(2) of the Constitution Act, 1982, states: "In this Act, 'Aboriginal peoples of Canada' includes the Indian, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada." These separate groups have unique heritages, languages, cultural practices, and spiritual beliefs. Their common link is their indigenous ancestry.

Anti-Racism Education: An approach that integrates the perspectives of Aboriginal and racialized communities into an educational system and its practices. Antiracist education seeks to identify and change educational policies, procedures, and practices that may foster racism, as well as the racist attitudes and behaviours that underlie and reinforce such policies and practices. It provides teachers and students with the knowledge and skills that will enable them to critically examine issues related to racism, power, and privilege. Antiracist education promotes the removal of discriminatory biases and systemic barriers.

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."

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

Ethnic: Pertaining to ethnicity.

Ethnicity: The shared national, ethnocultural, racial, linguistic, and/or religious heritage of a group of people, whether or not they live in their country of origin.

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.

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

Anti-Racism and Ethnocultural Equity Procedure

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

Race: A social construct that groups people on the basis of common ancestry and characteristics such as colour of skin, shape of eyes, hair texture, and/or facial features. The term is used to designate the social categories into which societies divide people according to such characteristics. Race is often confused with ethnicity; there may be several ethnic groups within a racial group.

Racism: A set of erroneous assumptions, opinions and actions stemming from the belief that one race is inherently superior to another. Racism may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

PROCEDURES:

HWDSB is committed to:

1.0 Policies, Guidelines and Practices

Commitment to Equity

- 1.1 Clearly articulating, through existing and new policies, guidelines and operating practices, a commitment to reflecting the ideals of anti-racism and ethnocultural equity.
- 1.2 Establishing practices and procedures that will ensure compliance with its policy of anti-racism and ethnocultural equity and make sure the policy is accessible to all employees, students, parents, and the community at large.

Accountability

- 1.3 Ensuring accountability, HWDSB will develop a framework to process the implementation of the policy on an annual basis.

2.0 Leadership

Commitment to Equity

- 2.1 Promoting an awareness of anti-racism and ethnocultural equity issues throughout the Board's jurisdiction.

Anti-Racism and Ethnocultural Equity Procedure

Staff Development

- 2.2 Providing learning opportunities regarding anti-racism and ethnocultural equity on an annual basis.

Removal of Barriers

- 2.3 Identifying and removing inequities and barriers related to all aspects of human resource activity in accordance with provincial and federal legislation.
- 2.4 Applying anti-racism and ethnocultural equity guiding principles to daily operations of schools.

3.0 School Community Partnership

Commitment to Equity

- 3.1 Promoting open dialogue and partnership with parents and community groups.

Cultural Interpretation

- 3.2 Recognizing the cultural and 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 the official languages.

Removal of Barriers

- 3.3 Opening channels of communication to enable community representatives from Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural, and religious communities to be involved in the development, implementation and review of the Board's policies.
- 3.4 Ensuring that each school staff, school council and/or existing parent group encourages community contribution and participation in planning activities/programs for schools.

4.0 Curriculum

Commitment to Equity

- 4.1 Creating committees responsible for curriculum development, implementation and evaluation, that will strive to include the involvement of the Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural, and religious diversity of staff, students, their families and the community at large.

Anti-Racism and Ethnocultural Equity Procedure

- 4.2 Having all elements in the process of curriculum review, development and implementation be consistent with the principles of anti-racism and ethnocultural equity.
- 4.3 Ensuring that as learning experiences are developed and/or modified, staff will strive to accurately reflect Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural, and religious diversity.
- 4.4 Curriculum policies, programs and learning materials that strive to include the perspectives and knowledges of Indigenous Peoples and the minoritized. All stakeholders will share in this responsibility.
- 4.5 Attempting to provide students with opportunities to critically examine issues of exclusivity/inclusivity, bias, discrimination and racism.

5.0 Student Languages

Commitment to Equity

- 5.1 First languages, including Aboriginal languages, shall be valued and respected.
- 5.2 All students having the opportunity to develop literacy in at least one official language.
- 5.3 Support programs being provided to facilitate and promote official language learning.

6.0 Student Assessment, Evaluation, Reporting and Placement

Commitment to Equity

- 6.1 Assessment, evaluation, reporting, placement and programming practices that strive to eliminate bias towards the Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural, and religious communities and shall take into account the students' previous education and personal experiences, and shall be designed to meet the needs of the individual student.
- 6.2 Students and/or parents/guardians being informed of all procedures and have the opportunity to be involved in the processes of registration, assessment, evaluation, reporting and placement.
- 6.3 Placement decisions being open to re-examination in order to maximize each student's educational and career opportunities.

Anti-Racism and Ethnocultural Equity Procedure

7.0 Counselling/Guidance/Support Services

Commitment to Equity

- 7.1 All programs and services which address students' personal needs, as well as their academic and career choices being delivered in a manner which is free of stereotyping towards the Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural, and religious communities.
- 7.2 Programs and services being reviewed and developed in partnership amongst school and home and may include community, business and industry and will reflect Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural, and religious diversity.
- 7.3 Counselling/guidance/support services that seek alternative services and community partnerships to meet the needs of the Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural, and religious diversity of students when appropriate.

Cultural Interpretation

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

8.0 Racial and Ethnocultural Harassment

Staff

- 8.1 Effective policies and procedures being in place for reporting, responding to and resolving incidents of harassment towards members of the Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural or religious communities. Every individual has the right to report harassment without fear of reprisal and every complaint shall be investigated confidentially in order to protect the rights of all individuals.

Staff Development

- 8.2 Professional development opportunities that provide staff with the knowledge, skills, and resources to effectively identify and respond to harassment.
- 8.3 Providing information to all trustees, employees, parents, volunteers, students and the community at large, in respect to HWDSB's Policy Against Harassment.

Anti-Racism and Ethnocultural Equity Procedure

Accountability

- 8.4 Ensuring that the process for addressing harassment towards the members of Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural, or religious communities is implemented and that a process of accountability is in place for all trustees, employees, parents, volunteers, students and the community at large.

9.0 Employment Practices

Commitment to Equity

- 9.1 Recruitment, interview, selection, training, placement, and promotion practices and procedures not discriminate against members of Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural, or religious communities and will not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, culture or religion.
- 9.2 Striving to modify interview teams to reflect the Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural, and religious diversity within the community at large.
- 9.3 Procedures for progressive discipline, performance appraisal, review and reporting that are free of bias towards the members of the Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural, and religious communities.
- 9.4 Human Resources practices, policies and procedures being part of the annual report and reviewed for bias regularly.

10.0 Staff Development

System Level

- 10.1 Identifying staff development needs to enable those responsible for implementing the Board's anti-racism and ethnocultural policy to have or develop the knowledge, skills and resources to carry out the mandate.
- 10.2 Implementing professional development programs based on identified needs to enable trustees and staff to understand the manifestations of racism and to respond effectively to issues of harassment towards the members of Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural, or religious communities.

Anti-Racism and Ethnocultural Equity Procedure

Page 7 of 7

- 10.3 Providing teaching staff with the knowledge, skills and resources needed to teach from an anti-racism perspective. This will enable educators to recognize and examine biased and discriminatory material and to facilitate the incorporation of the perspectives and knowledges of Indigenous Peoples and the minoritized in the curriculum.
- 10.4 Involving community groups and employee groups in the development and implementation of in-service programs and staff development programs.
- 10.5 Requiring all employees and trustees to broaden their knowledge of anti-racism and ethnocultural equity through courses, workshops and community consultation.