GREATER ESSEX COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Policy: Equity and Inclusive Education

Reference No: P-AD-38

The Greater Essex County District School Board (GECDSB) is committed to student achievement as well as student and staff well-being, diversity, and inclusion. The Board is working to ensure equitable access and outcomes through accessible, inclusive, diverse, and anti-colonial learning and working environments. The Board is committed to fostering learning and working environments that uphold human rights and equity, are proactively anti-racist and anti-oppressive and are welcoming, safe, equitable, inclusive, accessible, affirming, and free from discrimination, oppression, harassment, harm, and reprisal.

The GECDSB affirms and upholds the principles of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and confirmed in the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action (2015)*. The Board is committed to identifying and removing discriminatory biases and systemic barriers and celebrating diversity and respect for all as outlined in:

- Ontario's Education Equity and Action Plan (2017).
- Ontario Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119, "Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools (2009)".
- Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy and Development and Implementation – Realizing the Promise of Diversity (2014).
- Policy and Program Memorandum 128, in the Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct (2019).
- The GECDSB Equity Plan.
- Indigenous Education Protocol.
- Special Education Plan.
- Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy.

The GECDSB is committed to equity, inclusion, and respect for all being reflected in all policies, programs, and practices. The GECDSB confirms its commitment to understanding and dismantling all forms of oppression. The GECDSB is also committed to helping students and staff acknowledge racist and oppressive ideologies and how they operate at the interpersonal, systemic, and structural levels. The GECDSB understands that greater equity in education is critical to the achievement and successful education, social-emotional and well-being outcomes for students.

The GECDSB is committed to creating an equitable and inclusive learning and working environment that upholds and reflects the Seven Guiding Principles of Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy.

Equity and Inclusive Education is founded on the Seven Guiding Principles Equity and Inclusive Education :

- Is a foundation of excellence.
- Meets individual needs.
- Identifies and eliminates barriers.
- Promotes a sense of belonging.
- Involves the broad community.
- Builds on and enhances previous and existing initiatives.

- Is demonstrated throughout the system.

Key to achieving this commitment is the ongoing collection, analysis and reporting of data from multiple sources to align resources that support schools; identify and eliminate systemic barriers to student success; create more equitable and inclusive school environments; and improve student achievement, socio-emotional development, and well-being.

NOTES:
The *Ontario Human Rights Code* identifies the following prohibited discrimination grounds in alphabetical order: age, ancestry, citizenship, colour, creed, disability, ethnic origin, family status, gender expression, gender identity, marital status, place of origin, race, sex, and sexual orientation. Every person has the right to equal treatment with respect to services without discrimination based on a prohibited ground.

The GECDSB recognizes that individuals may experience discrimination and harassment based on the intersection of more than one ground of discrimination which is called intersectionality.

DEFINITIONS

DIVERSITY
The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status. Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009)

DISCRIMINATION
Discrimination is unfair or prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups on the basis of grounds set out in the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, or on the basis of other similar elements such as:

1) Not individually assessing the unique merits, capacities, and circumstances of a person.
2) Instead making stereotypical assumption based on a person's presumed traits.
3) Having the impact of excluding persons, denying benefits, or imposing burdens.

EQUITY
A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences. (Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009)

HARASSMENT
Harassment is defined in subsection 10(1) of the *Ontario Human Rights Code* as "engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome".

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION
Education is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students need to see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected. (Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009)

GREATER ESSEX COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Regulation: Equity and Inclusive Education

Reference No: R-AD-38

The Greater Essex County District School Board (GECDSB) believes that equity of opportunity and equity of access to programs, services, and resources are critical to the achievement and socio-emotional development and well-being and of successful outcomes for all. The Board is committed to implementing action programs and supports which will allow students and staff to realize their full potential.

The Seven Guiding Principles that are representative of equity and inclusive education:

- Is a foundation of excellence.
- Meets individual needs.
- Identifies and eliminates barriers.
- Promotes a sense of belonging.
- Involves the broad community.
- Builds on and enhances previous and existing initiatives.
- Is demonstrated throughout the system.

Key to achieving this commitment is the ongoing collection, analysis and reporting of data from multiple sources to align resources that support schools; identify and eliminate systemic barriers to student success; create more equitable and inclusive school environments; and improve student achievement, socio-emotional development, and well-being.

The Board's aim is to translate into action:

- Ontario's Education Equity and Action Plan (2017).
- Ontario Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119, "Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools (2009)".
- Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation – Realizing the Promise of Diversity (2014), the GECDSB Equity Action Plan, GECDSB Indigenous Education Protocol, Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy, as well as the Board's commitment to maximizing the potential of all students.

The GECDSB also affirms and upholds the principles enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Constitution Act (1982), the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action (2015).

GUIDELINES:

1. <u>Board Policies, Programs, Guidelines and Practices</u>

The Board is committed to the development and cyclical review of policies, guidelines, programs, and practices designed to identify and eliminate discriminatory barriers in the workplace and the learning environment. All Board policies, programs, guidelines, and practices will work to serve students, staff, and families in all communities by incorporating the principles of equity and inclusion into structures, polices, procedures guidelines, programs, and practices, consistent with the principles of the Ontario Human Rights Code. This commitment will assist in the achievement

of a learning and working environment reflective of the composition of the communities served by the GECDSB.

Inclusive Education
Education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students need to see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected. (*Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy*, 2014)

Responsibilities
The Board of Trustees are responsible for supporting the effective implementation of the Equity and Inclusion Education Policy by:

1.1 Knowing and understanding the seven guiding principles of the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy.
1.2 Reviewing and amending policies through an equity and inclusive lens.
1.3 Using an equity lens to inform decisions regarding resource allocation to support the district achievement and planning process.
1.4 Assuming responsibility for examining and taking steps to modify behaviours that are inconsistent with equity and inclusive principles.
1.5 Representing the views of all communities.

The Director of Education is responsible for supporting the effective implementation of the Equity and Inclusive Education Policy by:

1.6 Providing leadership to work towards a collaborative system-based process in the development, implementation and /or review of all Board policies, procedures and practices through an equity and inclusion lens.
1.7 Knowing and understanding the seven guiding principles of the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy.
1.8 Supporting the collection and use of data that will identify the needs of the diversity of the community and support the use of the data to inform practices that are equitable and inclusive.
1.9 Assuming responsibility for examining and taking steps to modify behaviours that are inconsistent with equity and inclusion principles.
1.10 Monitoring and assessing organizational compliance with the policy.

Superintendents, Principals, Managers and Supervisors are responsible for supporting the effective implementation of the Equity and Inclusion Education Policy by:

1.11 Knowing and understanding the seven guiding principles of the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy.
1.12 Understanding, identifying, disrupting, and addressing discriminatory practices, rules, and ideologies.
1.13 Providing guidance on the use of educational materials that are identity-affirming, and which promote equity and inclusion using the GECDSB Resource Selection tool.
1.14 Supporting school staff in identifying and addressing disproportionality and disparities resulting from discriminatory bias to enable equity and inclusion in school practice.
1.15 Taking reasonable steps to provide accommodations of religious and spiritual observances as outlined in the Board's "Guidelines for the Accommodation of Religious Requirements,

Practices, and Observances."

1.16 Investigating allegations of racism, hate or harassment behaviours and participate in the investigation process to resolve the situation.

1.17 Leading the restoration of working relationships and the learning environment following incidents of racism, harassment, or oppression.

1.18 Participating in the implementation of initiatives to support and promote equity and inclusive policies and practices.

1.19 Examining and taking steps to modify behaviours that are inconsistent with equity and inclusion principles.

Board employees are responsible for supporting the effective implementation of the Equity and Inclusive Education Policy by:

1.20 Knowing and understanding the seven guiding principles of the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy.

1.21 Understanding, identifying, disrupting, and addressing discriminatory practices, rules, and ideologies.

1.22 Using inclusive and respectful language and approaches in all interactions.

1.23 Communicating and working effectively with everyone.

1.24 Demonstrating a belief that all students can learn and a commitment to meeting the needs of all students in diverse ways.

1.25 Working to implement materials and activities that are accessible, culturally responsive and that will represent the diversity, values, backgrounds, and experiences of all.

1.26 Being aware of and implementing the board's "Guide for Recognizing and Respecting, Faith, Religious, Creed, and Spiritual Accommodation."

1.27 Modeling the equity and inclusive values and vision of the school, department, and Board.

1.28 Understanding that equity and inclusion principles apply to everyone.

1.29 Assuming responsibility for examining and taking steps to modify behaviours that are inconsistent with equity and inclusion principles.

Students are responsible for supporting the effective implementation of the Equity and Inclusive Education Policy by:

1.30 Using inclusive and respectful language and approaches in all interactions.

1.31 Communicating and working effectively with everyone.

1.32 Modeling the equity and inclusion values and vision of the school.

1.33 Understanding that equity and inclusion principles apply to everyone.

1.34 Examining and taking steps to modify behaviours that are inconsistent with equity and inclusion principles.

Parents/guardians/caregivers are responsible for supporting the effective implementation of the Equity and Inclusive Education Policy by:

1.35 Fostering a commitment to support equitable and inclusive practices in schools.

1.36 Using inclusive and respectful language and approaches in all interactions at school.

1.37 Communicating effectively with everyone.

1.38 Understanding that equity and inclusion principles apply to everyone.

1.39 Assuming responsibility for examining and taking steps to modify behaviours that are inconsistent with equity and inclusion principles.

1.40 Reporting incidents of hate, harassment and discrimination that are witnessed or experienced to the school Principal.

2. Shared and Committed Leadership

The principle of shared and committed leadership recognizes that all partners in education including community partners and families are responsible for preparing students to live successfully with agency and dignity in a diverse society. The board will work with all educational partners to provide leadership that is responsive to the diverse nature and needs of the GECDSB's communities by working to identify and remove discriminatory biases and/or systemic barriers for student achievement and student and staff well-being.

The Director of Education shall:

2.1 Allocate staff and resources to ensure that practices are in place to support all students and staff in developing the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours required to implement the Equity and Inclusion policies and procedures.

2.2 Work to establish a collaborative culture where the collective capabilities and voice of all stakeholders are used to develop and implement equity and inclusions goals.

Superintendents shall:

2.3 Work to support that priorities and services are consistent with the Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy.

2.4 Establish selection criteria for leadership positions that includes emphasis on demonstrated knowledge, skills, and commitment to equity and inclusive leadership.

2.5 Work to support that performance appraisals of all staff include a lens of equity and inclusion practices evidenced through practice.

2.6 Establish a collaborative culture where the collective capabilities and voices of all stakeholders are used to develop and implement equity and inclusion goals.

Principals, Managers and Supervisors shall:

2.7 Work to support that day-to-day implementation of programs are consistent with the Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy.

2.8 Implement strategies to include the voices of all members of the community, including those that are underserved and/or marginalized, in shared leadership.

2.9 Use data to identify underserved and/or marginalized groups and their needs in relation to equity and inclusion.

2.10 Work to support instructional practices and curriculum content address the goals of equity and inclusion.

2.11 Establish a collaborative culture where the collective capabilities and voices of all stakeholders are used to develop and implement equity and inclusion goals.

2.12 Promote and support student and staff leadership and agency that reflects a commitment to equity, inclusion, and social justice.

2.13 Work to support the performance appraisals of all staff include a lens of equity and inclusion practices evidenced through practice.

2.14 Work to support that all educational practices are inclusive and reflect diversity while identifying, addressing, and removing all forms of stereotyping, and discrimination.

2.15 Work to support student-led clubs and initiatives are aware of and adhere to the Seven Guiding Principles of Ontario's Equity and Inclusion Education Strategy.

Staff shall:

2.16 Demonstrate leadership in setting the tone for the positive implementation of Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy.

2.17 Promote and support student leadership and agency related to equity, inclusion, and social justice.

2.18 Work to ensure that educational practices are inclusive and reflect the contributions of all dimensions of diversity and take action to identify, address and remove all forms of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination.

2.19 Support student council and/or other student-led events and initiatives that address equity and inclusion practices.

2.20 Be intentional about the process to invite students to participate in student-led clubs and initiatives to address equity and inclusion practices.

Students shall:

2.21 Work to support the respect and the diversity of voices in their school community and participate ethically in learning and school/student-led initiatives.

2.22 Support the formation of student-led clubs, councils, and initiatives to address equity and inclusion practices.

2.23 Model daily interactions that are inclusive of all members of the school community.

2.24 Work to improve school climate to support a learning environment that meets the needs of all students.

3. School Community Relationships

The board will endeavour to establish and maintain collaborative relationships with all school communities so that the perspectives and needs of all students, families and employees are recognized and addressed through shared and committed leadership, and positive community relationships.

The Director of Education shall:

3.1 Work to support community partnerships support the principles of equity and inclusion and reflect the diversity of the broader community.

3.2 Allocate staff and resources to identify and remove discriminatory barriers that limit engagement of students, parents/guardians/caregivers, and community so that diverse groups and the broader community have access to Board initiatives.

Superintendents of Education shall:

3.3 Support staff for whom they are responsible to demonstrate the board's commitment to ensuring that community partnerships reflect the diversity of the broader community.

3.4 Consult with community groups, as appropriate, in the design and implementation of professional development opportunities by assessing staff needs with respect to Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education strategy.

3.5 Develop and support a process to review existing community partnerships within their schools and departments to ensure that they reflect the diversity of the broader community and are in line with Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy.

Principals, Managers, and Supervisors shall:

3.6 Create a safe, caring, and supportive learning and working environment and sense of belonging for all students, staff, parents/guardians/caregivers, and members of the community.

3.7 Implement a process to review existing community partnerships to ensure that they reflect the diversity of the broader community.

3.8 Invite and expand community outreach efforts to foster new partnerships with external service agencies.

3.9 Work to ensure that school councils reflect the diversity of the school community.

3.10 Work to support effective and appropriate communication with community partners that is accessible including a variety of languages, as necessary.

3.11 Work to support students, parents/guardians/caregivers and staff have access to supportive community resources as appropriate for use in schools and workplaces.

Staff shall:

3.12 Create a safe, caring, and supportive learning environment and sense of belonging for all students promoting a positive home-school connection.

3.13 Encourage the development of partnerships with communities that reflect the plurality of society and that enhance educational opportunities for all students.

3.14 Implement practices in the classroom that enable the diversity of student voices through instruction, self-advocacy, student agency and home-school connections.

3.15 Invite partnerships with parents/guardians/caregivers and community members as a way to capitalize on the resources within their diverse communities to support instruction, student leadership and agency and knowledge development.

3.16 Support and plan school events that are accessible and respond to the diversity in the community.

Parents/Guardians/Caregivers and Community Members will make best efforts to:

3.17 Encourage the participation of community groups in schools.

3.18 Respond to school and system surveys, feedback forms, school council and parent engagement events to provide diversity of voices.

3.19 Identify suggestions and provide feedback to further improve school-community partnerships.

Students shall:

3.20 Demonstrate respect and understanding for their diverse school community.

3.21 Respond to system surveys, feedback forms, student council, student voice forums to ensure diversity of voices when providing suggestions and feedback to improve school-community partnerships.

3.22 Share information about the school community through various means including, but not limited to announcements, student leadership groups, with their families and community events.

4. Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment Practices

The board will review curriculum, learning resources, and instructional and assessment/evaluation practices, and will endeavor to identify and address discriminatory bias, as part of its goal to ensure equity and access of opportunity for each student. The board will work to uphold the implementation of an inclusive curriculum, supported by resources and instructional strategies, and assessment practices that are identity-affirming and respond to the needs of the diversity of learners.

The Director of Education shall:

4.1 Allocate staff and resources to support the development of inclusive curriculum and assessment practices.

4.2 Work to support that there is a process in place for the identification and elimination of barriers and biases in all curriculum and assessment practices.

Superintendents of Education shall:

4.3 Provide leadership in building capacity for implementing inclusive and equitable curriculum and assessment practices as well as Culturally Relevant & Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP).

4.4 Support schools in reviewing classroom strategies and school planning that promote school- wide equity and inclusive practices.

Principals shall:

4.5 Provide opportunities for staff to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to provide differentiated assessment and instructional strategies that are equitable in order to promote student achievement and well-being.

4.6 Commit to supporting professional learning networks to develop the collective capacity of staff to meet the needs of all students through the lens of equity.

4.7 Use collaborative problem solving that is equitable and inclusive in determining approaches to prevention and intervention in response to students' individual needs.

4.8 Work to support instructional methods, materials and assessment practices are free from discrimination, accessible to all and reflect Ontario's diversity.

Staff shall:

4.9 Use a variety of assessment strategies and tools to inform short and long-range planning that is free from biases and barriers to improve student learning and achievement.

4.10 Use an equity and inclusion lens to differentiate classroom practices through content, processes, products, and the students' learning environment for students.

4.11 Implement culturally responsive curriculum materials and activities that are accessible and represent the diversity, value, and background of the school community and which reflect the equity objectives and inclusive practices that have been mandated by the board.

4.12 Provide a safe, caring, and supportive learning environment that values individual differences and diversity and engages students and families in identifying and removing biases and barriers to student achievement and well-being.

4.13 Provide instruction that is equitable and inclusive and reinforces the belief that all students can learn given the right amount of time and support.

Central office staff who support services for students shall:

4.14 Collaborate to ensure the principles and practices of equity and inclusive education permeate the curriculum in all subject and program areas.

4.15 Provide support and resources on the evaluation of learning materials and assessment practices ensuring instructional and assessment practices are free from biases and barriers and are in accordance with Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy.

4.16 Support the review of classroom and school-wide strategies that promote equity and inclusion.

4.17 Provide resources, training and supports to curricular instruction and assessment practices that are accessible, culturally responsive and represent the diversity, values, and backgrounds of the plurality of society.

4.18 Collaborate to ensure that instructional and assessment information from a variety of sources be considered to facilitate the development and learning for students with special needs.

5. Religious Accommodation

The board recognizes and values religious diversity within the community and is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and equitable environment for all, free from all form of discriminatory or harassing behaviours based on religion.

Freedom of religion is individual rights and a collective responsibility. The board and the communities it serves must work together to foster an inclusive learning environment that

promotes acceptance and protects religious freedom for all individuals. While the board and its staff will take all reasonable steps to ensure freedom of religion and religious practices, it is expected that students and their families will help the board to understand their religious needs and will work with the board and its schools to determine appropriate and reasonable accommodation. (Ontario Education Services Corporation)

Please refer to the Greater Essex County District School Board's "Guidelines for Recognizing and Respecting Faith, Religion, Creed, and Spiritual Accommodations".

The Director of Education shall:

5.1. Allocate staff resources to support the "Guide for Recognizing and Respecting Faith, Religious, Creed, and Spiritual Accommodation".

Superintendents of Education shall:

5.2. Assist with the monitoring of the implementation of the Guide "Guide for Recognizing and Respecting, Faith, Religious, Creed, and Spiritual Accommodation".

5.3. Support school administrators in understanding and addressing questions regarding religious accommodations in accordance with all Board policies, procedures, and guidelines.

5.4. Address questions regarding religious accommodation in a timely and appropriate manner, and in accordance with all Board policies, procedures, and guidelines.

5.5. Commit to making staff aware of and adhere to avoiding the scheduling of events on faith days.

5.6. Commit to helping all schools, workplaces and community members are aware of the Guidelines for Recognizing and Respecting Faith, Religious, Creed, and Spiritual Accommodations.

Principals, Managers and Supervisors shall:

5.7. Communicate the "Guide for Recognizing and Respecting, Faith, Religious, Creed, and Spiritual Accommodation" with parents/guardians/caregivers, students and staff and members of the community as a support to responding to requests.

5.8. Commit to helping staff review and comply with avoiding the scheduling of events on faith days.

5.9. Accept and monitor staff requests for absences from work for the observance of faith days following collective agreements.

5.10. Commit to responding to religious accommodation requests and following the Guidelines for Recognizing and Respecting Faith, Religious, Creed, and Spiritual Accommodations and are documented.

Teachers shall:

5.11. Provide information to parents/guardians/caregivers about the process of requesting religious accommodation in a timely and respectful manner.

5.12. Seek parent/guardian input and clarification about religious accommodations requests to provide appropriate programming accommodations in a timely and respectful manner.

5.13. Respond to religious accommodations requests in consultation with the principal.

5.14. Provide appropriate programming accommodations in a timely and respectful manner using the Guidelines for Religious Accommodation of Religious Requirements, Practices and Observances.

Staff shall:

5.15 Abide by Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and the Board Equity and Inclusive Policy and procedure.

5.16 Address all requests for religious accommodation in a safe, timely and appropriate manner.

5.17 Engage in equity education training required for their role as well as specific learning to uphold the protection enshrined in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

5.18 Submit request or leave for observance of faith in accordance with their collective agreement.

5.19 Request religious accommodation to their principal, manager, or supervisor.

Students, Parents/Guardians/Caregivers and Community Members shall:

5.20 Make requests for religious accommodation in accordance with the "Guide for Recognizing and Respecting, Faith, Religious, Creed, and Spiritual Accommodation".

5.21 Make every reasonable effort to understand and respect religious accommodation requirements.

6. School Climate and Workplace Climate and the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment

The board is committed to providing equitable learning and working environments. Students and staff have the right to learn and work in an environment free of harassment and discrimination, where a spirit of equity prevails. The board has a duty to maintain an environment respectful of human rights and free of all forms of harassment and or discrimination.

The board shall condemn and refuse to tolerate all manifestations of discrimination and harassment and will take an active role in the elimination of these manifestations. Board mechanisms work towards the eradication of discrimination and harassment by ensuring that all members of the school community are aware of a timely and measured response to claims of discrimination of any kind.

The Director of Education shall:

6.1 Support the expectation that all staff are responsible for the development of positive school and workplace climates, free from discrimination and harassment, where all members of the community feel safe, welcomed, and accepted.

6.2 Allocate staff, including a third party, where applicable, and resources to develop, identify and outline a process to review and report any claims of discrimination and/or harassment that limit engagement by staff students, parents/guardians/caregivers and community members as outlined in Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy.

6.3 Establish accountability and monitoring processes to ensure continuous implementation of positive climates for learning and working environments.

Superintendents of Education shall:

6.4 Work with appropriate staff to implement practice and strategies to ensure positive school and workplace climates, free from discrimination and harassment, where all members of the community feel safe, welcomed, and accepted.

6.5 Support data collection related to positive school and workplace climates using surveys and other tools.

6.6 Work with appropriate staff to identify and eliminate discriminatory barriers that limit engagement by students, parents/guardians/caregivers, staff and the broader community in Board policies, guidelines, day-to-day operations, protocol, and practices.

Principals, Managers and Supervisors shall:

6.7 Support initiatives and foster dialogue to create understanding and respect for diversity which will foster safe working and learning environments for all students and staff.

6.8 Review policies, procedures, guidelines, and directives with staff to address the prohibitive grounds of discrimination under the Ontario Human Rights Code as they may apply to students.

6.9 Support staff by using effective strategies and practices to monitor, analyze and implement schools and workplace climates that are free from discrimination and harassment, and where all members of the community feel safe, welcomed, and accepted.

6.10 Communicate and follow the process that enables students and staff to report incidents of harassment and discrimination safely and have confidence that they will receive an impartial, timely and appropriate response.

6.11 Implement strategies to identify and eliminate discriminatory barriers that limit engagement by staff, students, parents, guardians, caregivers, and the broader community in Board policies, guidelines, directives, day-to-day operations, protocol, and practices.

6.12 Monitor and analyze the school and workplace climate through surveys and other tools to help identify behaviours, issue, or barriers that should be addressed.

Staff shall:

6.13 Implement practices and strategies to ensure positive school and workplace climates, free from discrimination and harassment, where all members of the community feel safe, welcomed, and accepted.

6.14 Follow the established process that enables students and staff to report incidents of discrimination and harassment safely and that will also enable the board to respond impartially in a timely and effective manner.

Teachers shall:

6.15 Support initiatives that foster dialogue that create understanding and respect for diversity, which will cultivate a positive, safe, caring, and supportive learning environment for all students.

6.16 Work to implement the educational practices that are inclusive and reflect the contributions for the diverse communities and that all forms of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination are addressed.

6.17 Use progressive discipline practices in an equitable and inclusive manner including peer mediation and restorative practices.

Students shall:

6.18 Use inclusive and respectful language and approaches in interactions with other students, staff, and all other community members.

6.19 Assume responsibility for examining and taking steps to modify behaviours that are inconsistent with equity and inclusion principles.

Parents/Guardians/Caregivers and Community members shall:

6.20 Foster a commitment to supporting an equitable and inclusive school climate for students and work environment for staff.

7. Professional Learning

The board will work to provide employees, students, and members of the GECDSB including trustees, parents/guardians/caregivers, visitors, contractors, third parties and others, with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behavior needed to identify and eliminate discriminatory biases and systemic barriers under the Ontario Human Rights Code and to promote an equitable and inclusive school climate in board schools.

The Director of Education shall:

7.1 Allocate staff and resources to establish a process with key performance indicators, to monitor progress of professional learning structures to support the implementation of Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and Board Policy and procedures.

Superintendents of Education shall:

7.2 Support the building capacity among staff for understanding and addressing issues that pertain to equity, diversity, and inclusivity, through collaborative learning communities and job embedded professional learning at all levels.

7.3 Embed equity and inclusion learning experiences in professional learning based on portfolio responsibilities.

7.4 Create a direct link to equity and inclusion learning in Board, School, and Department Improvement plans.

7.5 Engage in and seek opportunities for their own professional learning to ensure full implementation of equity and inclusion strategies and approaches at all levels of the organization.

Principals, Managers and Supervisors shall:

7.6 Use a variety of assessment tools with staff members to identify and monitor staff development needs to enhance the understanding, knowledge, skills, and competency of staff in creating equitable and inclusive school and workplace environments.

7.7 Develop school and departmental achievement/improvement plans that identify professional learning goals that are aligned with Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and Board policy and regulations.

7.8 Build staff capacity through ongoing professional learning that is equitable and inclusive and is based on needs determined through results-oriented and evidence-based research.

7.9 Support programs and initiatives for professional learning that provide staff opportunities to participate in training that increases school and workplace community's knowledge and understanding of equity and inclusivity practices.

Staff shall:

7.10 Work collaboratively to review workplace strategies and professional learning plans, and revise them as needed, to ensure alignment with Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and the Board policy and procedures.

7.11 Undertake ongoing professional learning initiatives that are results-oriented, evidence-based and support the development of equitable and inclusive workplace experiences that creates positive results.

Teachers shall:

7.12 Seek and participate in opportunities for their own professional learning to ensure full implementation of equity and inclusivity strategies and approaches throughout the school community that are results-oriented, evidence-based and support the development of equitable and inclusive learning experiences.

7.13 Participate in professional learning that is designed to collaboratively review classroom strategies and revise them as needed to ensure that they are aligned with an reflect school-wide equity and inclusion policies.

7.14 Participate in professional learning that is designed to use data to identify students' strengths, needs and interests to inform the development of equitable and inclusive learning experiences and opportunities.

8. Accountability and Transparency

The Board is committed to assessing and monitoring its progress in implementing an Equity and Inclusive Education Policy; to embedding the principles into all other Board policies, programs, guidelines, and practices; and to communicating these results to the community.

As per PPM 119, it is expected that Boards post their Equity and Inclusive Education Policy on their website. Board and school improvement plans, within the context of a Board's strategic multi-year plan, will take into consideration the Board's Equity and Inclusive Education Policy. The plans should include a focus on identifying and removing any barriers to student learning to reduce gaps in achievement and provide a respectful and responsive school climate.

The Director of Education's annual report will be posted to the website which will inform the public about the progress the board has made in meeting strategic priorities.

The Director of Education shall:

8.1 Ensure that the Board's Equity and Inclusion Policy and related procedures are shared and communicated to all schools, workplaces, and the community.
8.2 Ensure that the equity and inclusion goals are embedded in the Board's planning processes.
8.3 Establish processes to monitor and report on the progress and ongoing organizational implementation of the Equity and Inclusion Policy, procedures, and practices.
8.4 Ensure that there are ongoing opportunities for the broader school community to provide input into Board policies, procedures, and planning processes.

Superintendents of Education shall:

8.5 Ensure the inclusion, implementation and monitoring of equity and inclusion goals and strategies in school and departmental improvement plans are in alignment with the Board's planning processes.
8.6 Ensure that incidents of harassment or discrimination are addressed in a timely and appropriate manner, and in accordance with Board policies and procedures.

Principals, Managers and Supervisor shall:

8.7 Develop equity and inclusion goals that are aligned with the Board's planning processes.
8.8 Develop and implement strategies to engage students, parents/guardians/caregivers, and broader school community to support and promote equity and inclusion practices.
8.9 Develop and implement communication strategies to ensure all parents/guardians/caregivers are informed about their child's educational achievement and progress in a way parent/guardians understand.
8.10 Establish processes to monitor and review the effectiveness of equity and inclusion goals and strategies identified in school and department plans.

Teachers shall:

8.11 Implement classroom strategies related to equity and inclusion that are aligned with the school's achievement plan.
8.12 Be committed to implementing communication strategies with parents/guardians are accessible, meaningful and in a manner that parents/guardians understand.
8.13 Develop strategies to support all students to reach their full potential in academic pathways.

Staff shall:

8.14 Abide by Ontario's Equity and Inclusion Education Strategy and the Board's Equity and Inclusion Policy and procedures.
8.15 Address all incidents of discrimination and harassment in a safe, timely and appropriate manner.
8.16 Engage in equity education training required for their role as well as specific learning to uphold the protections enshrined in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Students, parents/guardians/caregivers and community members shall:
8.17 Actively engage in providing feedback and input requested by the school or Board.

Reference Documents

A. Government Documents

- Education Act
- Ontario Human Rights Code
- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- Occupational Health and Safety Act – Violence and Harassment
- Policy/Program Memorandum 119- Developing and Implementing equity and inclusive education policies in Ontario schools.

B. Board Policies:

- Employee Standards of Conduct (P-HR-09)
- Health and Safety, Workplace Violence and Workplace Harassment (P-BA-06)
- Human Rights (P-AD-48)
- Trustee Code of Conduct (P-GV-06)
- Public Concerns Policy (P-AD-52)

C. Board Administrative Procedures/Regulations:

- Correcting Employee Behaviour and Progressive Discipline (AP-HR-30)
- Digital Responsibility (R-IT-03)

D. Board Resources

- Guidelines for Recognizing and Respecting Faith, Religion, Creed, and Spiritual Accommodations"
- Board Equity Plan
- Indigenous Education Protocol
- Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy
- Special Education Plan