

# **GREATER ESSEX COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

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## **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. Board Policies, Programs, Guidelines and Practices**

The Board is committed to the development and cyclical review of policies, guidelines, programs,



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 PE**

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**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.



**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



**Regulation:**



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".

**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 (including grandparents) and Accommodated Staff shall follow the requirements.**

**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



**Regulation:**

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
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