


Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board



Section: Administration

POLICY
A: 14 Promoting and Supporting Equity & Inclusion Within a Catholic Community

NUMBER:	A: 14
EFFECTIVE:	Nov. 9, 1999
AMENDED:	March 8, 2005 Sept. 28, 2010 June 14, 2011 Feb. 26, 2020
RELATED POLICIES:	See References
REPEALS:	
REVIEW DATE:	2025-2026

1.0 OBJECTIVE:

- 1.1 To issue a policy statement articulating the Board’s vision and commitment to the equity and inclusive education strategy.
- 1.2 To guide the actions of the Board and its schools, in honouring its commitments to equity and inclusive education policy development, implementation, monitoring and reporting in a manner consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- 1.3 To create an environment of responsive pastoral care for all students and their families.

2.0 GENERAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- 2.1 The Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board (the “Board”) recognizes that all people are created equal, in the image of God, each with inimitable characteristics deserving of dignity (Genesis: 1:27). In accordance with the Church’s teachings, it is the policy of the Board to provide, within its denominational Constitutionally protected rights, in all its operations an educational environment which continues to support diversity within its Catholic community.
- 2.2 The Board recognizes that any form of social or cultural discrimination is incompatible with Catholic moral principles and is in violation of the Ontario Human Rights Code. The Board recognizes that the school system gives pre-eminence to the tenets of the Catholic faith, congruent with the protection afforded in the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, the *Constitution Act, 1982* and confirmed in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.
- 2.3 The Board and its staff are committed to the elimination of discrimination some forms of which are outlined in Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (the “Strategy”) and the Ontario Ministry of Education (the “Ministry”) Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 (2013), in a manner which is consistent with the exercise of the Board’s denominational rights under section 93 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* and as recognized at section 19 of the Ontario *Human Rights Code* (the “Code”).

3.0 SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES

- 3.1 Board and school administration will maintain and develop procedures, processes, programs and guidelines that will comply with the principles and directives of this policy as well as the directives and requirements of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Education Act, Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 119 and the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy.

4.0 BOARD POLICIES, PROGRAMS, PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES

4.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- i. The Board is committed to serving staff, students, and families in its diverse Catholic community by continuing to incorporate the principles of equity and inclusive education into all aspects of its policies, programs, procedures, and practices that are consistent with Catholic denominational rights.
- ii. The Board will endeavour to identify and remove discriminatory biases and systemic barriers that may limit the opportunities of individuals from diverse communities for employment, mentoring, retention, promotion, and succession planning in all board and school positions. This will assist in developing a workforce that is capable of understanding and responding to the experiences of the diverse communities within the Board's jurisdiction.

5.0 SHARED AND COMMITTED LEADERSHIP

5.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- i. The Board shall continue to strive to provide leadership that is committed to identifying and removing discriminatory biases and systemic barriers to learning.
- ii. In accordance with the Ministry's Ontario Leadership Strategy, effective Board and school leaders will continue to encourage and promote a collaborative approach to all dimensions of equity and inclusive education, which involves the participation of students, parents, the Catholic community, unions, colleges and universities, service organizations and other community partners.

5.2 SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES:

The Board will identify a Board equity and inclusive education contact to liaise with the Ministry of Education and other Boards in order to share challenges, promising practices, and resources.

6.0 SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

6.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- i. The Board is committed to establishing and maintaining partnerships with all members of our diverse community so that the perspectives and experiences of all students, families, and employees are recognized within the context of the Catholic faith.

7.0 INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

7.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- i. The Board is committed to implementing an inclusive curriculum based on Catholic teaching and values, to reviewing resources, instruction, assessment and evaluation practices in order to identify and address discriminatory biases so that each student may maximize her or his learning potential.
- ii. The Board is committed to three core priorities:
 - a) high levels of student achievement;
 - b) reduced gaps in student achievement; and
 - c) increased public confidence in publicly funded education.
- iii. Schools shall provide students and staff with authentic and relevant opportunities to learn about diverse histories, cultures, and perspectives. Students should be able to see themselves represented in the curriculum, programs, and culture of the school in a manner consistent with Catholic teaching and values.

8.0 RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

8.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- i. The Board is committed to the values of freedom of religion and freedom from discriminatory or harassing behaviour based on religion.
- ii. Within the framework of gospel values, traditions, and the Board's denominational rights, the Board will attempt to provide reasonable accommodation for students' and staffs' religious beliefs and practices, while also protecting its denominational rights as a Catholic school system.

8.2 SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES:

- i. The Board will prepare a religious accommodation guideline in keeping with the Code, and consistent with its denominational rights, which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of creed, and other Code protected grounds,

and provides a duty to accommodate within the parameters of the board's denominational rights.

9.0 SCHOOL CLIMATE AND THE PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

9.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- i. The Board is committed to the principle that every person within the school community is entitled to a respectful, positive and Christ-centred school climate and learning environment, free from all forms of discrimination and harassment.
- ii. The Board recognizes that a safe and welcoming environment is most conducive to learning. The Board will therefore seek to foster a Christ-centred, positive school climate, free from discriminatory or harassing behaviour. The Board acknowledges that a Christ-centered, positive school climate is one where all members of the school community feel safe, welcomed, and accepted. The principles of equity and inclusive education support positive student behaviour.
- iii. The Board will incorporate questions on equity and inclusive education in school climate surveys to help identify and address inappropriate behaviours, barriers, or issues. School climate surveys of students and staff and the parents of their students are conducted at least once every two years, in accordance with subsection 169.1(2.1) of the Education Act.

9.2 SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES:

- i. The Board will put procedures in place that will enable students and staff to report incidents of discrimination and harassment safely and that will also enable the Board to respond in a timely manner.
- ii. At the request of at least one student, the principal of each secondary school shall designate a vice-principal to establish and oversee a Social Justice / Equity Club or Gay-Straight Alliance. The purpose of the club is to:
 - a) support all students in their personal growth and development;
 - b) establish an inclusive structure that allows students to become actively involved in social justice issues;
 - c) provide, within the context of a diverse student population, ~~provide~~ opportunities for students to be supported through direct involvement in club activities conducted within the established framework of the teaching of the Catholic Church and within a safe and nurturing environment; and

- iv. The principal or designate shall provide on a semi-annual basis to the Catholic School Advisory Council, updates regarding the activities of the Social Justice/Equity Club or Gay-Straight Alliance.

10.0 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

10.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- i. The Board is committed to providing the school community, including students, with opportunities for learning activities that focus on topics such as antiracism, antidiscrimination, and gender-based violence in addition to faith formation so that they may acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours needed to identify and eliminate discriminatory biases and systemic barriers under the *Code*.

11.0 ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

11.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

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

11.2 SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES:

- i. The Board will:

 - a) actively communicate the equity and inclusive education policy to students, teachers, parents, staff, school councils, community partners, and volunteers and post it on the Board’s website.
 - b) engage Board and school teams in school improvement planning that considers the Board’s equity and inclusive education policy. The plans should focus on identifying and removing barriers to student learning in order to reduce gaps in achievement and provide a respectful and responsible school climate.
 - c) embed Equity Action Goals to frame priorities for the year in the areas of Catholic Community, Culture and Caring; Literacy; Numeracy; and Pathways Planning and Programming in Board and school improvement plans.

- ii. The Director of Education’s annual report will inform the ministry about the Board’s progress in implementing its equity and inclusive education policy.

12.0 RESPONSIBILITY:

- 12.1 The Director of Education/designate is responsible for assisting the Board in the process of integrating equity and inclusive education concepts into the review and development of Board policies.
- 12.2 The Director of Education shall identify a Board equity and inclusive education contact to liaise with the Ministry of Education and other Boards in order to share challenges, promising practices, and resources.
- 12.3 School administration is responsible for ensuring the requirements of this policy are implemented in the schools in a manner consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

13.0 REVIEW AND EVALUATION:

- 13.1 The effectiveness of this policy and implementation of the Strategy will be monitored on an on-going basis.
- 13.2 The policy shall be reviewed in 2025-2026 or earlier if required.

14.0 REFERENCES:

- Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation, 2014
- Ministry of Education, Ontario, Reach Every Student: Energizing Ontario Education (Toronto: Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2008)
- Ministry of Education, Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009
- Ministry of Education, Policy / Program Memorandum 119, Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools, dated April 22, 2013
- Other Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memoranda include,
 - No. 108, “Opening or Closing Exercises in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools”, January 12, 1989;
 - No. 112, “Education About Religion in the Public Elementary and Secondary Schools”, December 6, 1990;
 - No. 127, “The Secondary School Literacy Graduation Requirement”, October 13, 2004;
 - No. 128, “The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct”, October 4, 2007;
 - No. 144, “Bullying Prevention and Intervention”, October 4, 2007; and
 - No. 145, “Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour”, October 4, 2007.

Ministry of Education, Ontario, Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards:
Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation (Toronto: Ministry of
Education, Ontario, 1993),

Ontario *Human Rights Code*

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom

Section 93 of the Constitution Act, 1867

Ontario Education Act, Bill 13

Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan, 2017

Ontario Regulation 181/98, "Identification and Placement of Exceptional Pupils",

Ontario Regulation 472/07, "Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils"