

Policy Title	Equity and Inclusive Education		
Date of Issue	June 15, 2010	Related Procedure	AP 6303-D; AP6304-D; AP 7520-D; AP 6301-D;
Revision Dates	February 21, 2012 (rev. Rationale-Strategic Plan)	Related Forms	
Review Date	June 1, 2013	Originator	Board of Trustees
References			
Accessibility Standards for Customer Services (BP 1411-D); Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity Policy (BP 6301-D); School Codes of Conduct; Progressive Discipline Policy (BP 6825-D); Ontario Ministry of Education - PPM #119; Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation (2009); Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (2009); Ontario Human Rights Code; Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; Education Act; Ontario Code of Conduct; Constitution Act, 1982; Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms; Human Rights Code; Toronto District School Board "Human Rights Policy"; Inclusive Language BP 1410-D and Inclusive Language Guidelines AP 1410-D; MET PPM No. 119; Education Act; BP 6821-D "Bullying Prevention & Intervention"; BP 6825-D "Progressive Discipline"; PPM 144 & 145;			

Policy:

RATIONALE

Bluewater District School Board Policies will support and provide direction necessary to achieve the Board's Vision, Mission and Strategic Plan priorities.

Bluewater District School Board is committed to providing safe schools and workplaces that not only respect the rights, but also recognize the worth of every individual. Everyone has the right to a workplace and educational environment free of discrimination and harassment.

The Board endeavours to promote inclusive education, as well as to understand, identify, and eliminate the biases, barriers, and power dynamics that limit our students' prospects for learning, growing, and fully contributing to society. (Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009)

POLICY

It is the policy of Bluewater District School Board to foster and promote equity of opportunity and equity of access to all programs, services and resources as they are critical to the independence, dignity, integration of our school system as a whole. The Board upholds the principles of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Constitution Act, 1982* and confirmed in the *Ontario Human Rights Code* (the "Code").

Bluewater District School Board is committed to fairness, equity and inclusive education as essential principles of our school system, and all of our policies, programs, operations and practices will reflect this commitment.

This Policy applies to all Bluewater District School Board students, employees, trustees and other users such as members of committees, clients of the Board, parents, volunteers, permit holders, contractors, and employees of organizations not related to the Board but who nevertheless work on or are invited onto Board premises. This policy also covers discrimination and harassment by such persons which occur outside the study/work place, and which are proven to have repercussions that adversely affect the Board's learning/working environment. This policy will act as a foundation for all Board operations.

DEFINITIONS

Antiracism and Ethnocultural equity

The equitable treatment of members of all racial and ethnocultural groups and the elimination of institutional and individual barriers to equity.

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, sex, sexual orientation, race, ancestry, appearance, ethnic background, place of origin, language, religion, age, disability, culture, gender, gender identity, physical and intellectual ability, and socio-economic status.

Ethnocultural

A person's cultural heritage in the broadest sense. It can include national affiliation, language, and religious beliefs. There are ethnocultural groups within racial groups.

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.

Harassment

Any conduct or comment, which is based on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, race, ancestry, appearance, ethnic background, place of origin, language, religion, age, disability, culture, gender, gender identity, physical and intellectual ability, and socio-economic status and might be perceived as placing a condition or restriction on any aspect of employment or learning; or which creates a working or learning environment that is intimidating, humiliating or uncomfortable. Harassment includes behaviour that the persons know, or reasonably ought to know, is offensive and actions that suggest or imply the inherent superiority of a particular group.

Human Rights

The basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled.

Inclusive Education

Education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected.

Creed (Religion)

Creed is interpreted to mean 'religious creed' or 'religion.' It is defined as a professed system and confession of faith, including both beliefs and observances or worship. A belief in a God or gods, or a single supreme being or deity is not a requisite. Religion is broadly accepted by the Commission to include, for example, non-deistic bodies of faith, such as the spiritual faiths/practices of aboriginal cultures, as well as bona fide newer religions (assessed on a case-by-case basis). (*Ontario Human Rights Policy Guidelines on Creed and the Accommodation of Religious Observances*)

SYSTEM EXPECTATIONS**Accountability**

1. All Board policies, procedures, guidelines, practices, operations, structures and programs will incorporate the principles of equity and inclusive education. The Board will continuously monitor and assess its communications, policies, programs, guidelines and practices to ensure they reflect the strategies and commitments of equity and inclusive education.

Leadership

1. The Board is committed to providing informed shared leadership that identifies, addresses and removes all forms of discrimination, consistent with the Human Rights Code, in order to improve student achievement and close achievement gaps. This informed leadership philosophy will inspire, empower, and support all stakeholders to join together to implement institutional practices and behaviours that cultivate equity and inclusive education.
2. In accordance with the Ministry's Ontario Leadership Strategy, effective Board and school leaders will encourage and promote a collaborative approach to all dimensions of equity and inclusive education, which ensures the participation of students, parents, unions, colleges and universities, service organizations and other diverse community partners.
3. The Board recognizes the critical connection between student leadership and improved student achievement and will strive to include the student voice in the implementation of equity and inclusive education.

Partnerships – Board, School & Community

1. Partnerships and communication channels shall be established and maintained among the Board, schools and diverse members of the community to ensure a greater understanding of and respect for diversity.

Curriculum & Training

1. The materials, resources and supports to curricula will recognize the diversity of students' backgrounds, languages, religions, beliefs or absence thereof, interests and experiences. A variety of viewpoints and perspectives will be reflected in all learning activities and will incorporate the roles of diverse members of the community.
2. Curricula shall ensure that the cultural and racial identities of all students are affirmed in an equitable and appropriate way by learning experiences.
3. All elements in the process of curriculum review, development and implementation shall be consistent with the objectives of equity and inclusivity.
4. The Board will provide students and the school community with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes required to identify and eliminate systemic barriers and discriminatory biases so that each student may maximize her or his learning potential.

Student Evaluation, Assessment & Placement

1. Bluewater District School Board follows the fundamental principals of student evaluation, assessment and placement as outlined in "Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools" (2010) and will endeavour to select and/or design evaluation, assessment & placement procedures to take into account the diversity of our community and address any discriminatory biases so that each student will have the opportunity to progress, grow and acquire the necessary skills and knowledge for their future.
2. Students and/or parents shall be informed about assessment instruments, evaluation and placement procedures.
3. The Board will provide opportunities for formative assessment, which is an essential component of an inclusive curriculum.

Guidance and Counselling

1. Academic and career counselling shall be free of all systemic barriers and discriminatory biases.
2. The Board is committed, through reasonable efforts, to ensuring necessary communication strategies are in place to keep parents informed of their children's current educational achievements and progress, and their plans for the future.

School Climate and the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment

1. The Board is committed to providing all members of the Bluewater community with a respectful, positive school climate and learning environment where they feel safe, accepted, valued and that is free from systemic barriers and all forms of harassment and discrimination.
2. The Board will ensure that students, employees, trustees, parents and community members are aware that nothing in this policy or procedure denies or limits access to other avenues of redress open under the law, such as a human rights complaint or grievance.
3. Harassment, discrimination or any expression thereof will not be tolerated and any such incident will be dealt with according to processes outlined in applicable Board policies.

Religious/Cultural Accommodation

1. The Board acknowledges each individual's right to follow or not follow religious beliefs and practices.
2. The Board is committed to providing religious/cultural accommodation to students and staff in an equitable and appropriate way.
3. Parents/Guardians will be provided with an opportunity to request religious/cultural accommodations through forms AF 6201 "School Registration Form" and AF 68313 "Student Health/Safety Information and Consent to Release" form.

Professional Development and Employment

1. The Board's recruitment, selection, training and promotion practices and procedures shall be free of barriers, bias and discrimination.
2. The Board will provide administrators and staff with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviour needed to identify and eliminate discriminatory biases and systemic barriers under the Code.

The Director of Education will authorize initiatives as necessary to support the ongoing commitment of Bluewater District School Board to equity of opportunity and equity of access to all programs, services and resources.