

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Keewatin-Patricia District School Board (the Board) that the principles of the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy policy shall guide all aspects of board operations, organizations, structures, policies, guidelines, and practices.

Rationale

Our communities are composed of people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. The dignity, equality, and worth of every person is recognized in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In the Keewatin-Patricia District School Board, we believe that all students can learn regardless of their race, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, colour, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, socio-economic status, or disability. 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.

Guidelines

The Board will ensure that all board policies, programs, procedures, and practices will align and integrate all the requirements of the Ontario Human Rights Code, Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119, and the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy. All areas of the teaching, learning, and administrative culture will reflect our respect for the diverse perspectives of the entire school community. Every effort will be made to identify and remove discriminatory biases and systemic barriers that may limit access to, and opportunity for, effective student engagement and achievement.

The Board will:

- a) continue to monitor and review its recruitment, hiring, and promotion practices to ensure they are equitable and inclusive;
- b) communicate and utilize the Board policies when dealing with all forms of discrimination and/or harassment as outlined in the Strategy; and
- c) promote fair, equitable, inclusive recruitment, hiring, promotion, and training opportunities for everyone at every level.

Cross Reference:
 Education Act S.8 29.1
 708 Respectful Working and Learning Environment
 709 Workplace Harassment
 329 Progressive Discipline & Promoting Positive Student Behaviour
 317, Approval of Textbooks 321, Safe Schools
 323, Suspension of Students 324, Expulsion of Students
 706, Employee Code of Conduct 322, Code of Conduct

Date Approved: February 13, 2001
 Date Revised: May 14/02; April 2005;
 : April 8/08; Oct 12/10;

Review by: 2014

1. Shared and Committed Leadership

The Board will provide leadership and support for program and policy initiatives that promote equity and inclusive education practices.

The Board is committed to providing informed shared leadership to improve student achievement and to close achievement gaps for students by identifying, addressing, and removing all barriers and forms of discrimination, consistent with the principles of the Ontario Human Rights Code.

The Board recognizes the critical connection between student leadership and improved student achievement and will strive to include student voice in the implementation of equity and inclusive education.

2. School-Community Relationships

The Board will establish and maintain effective relationships with diverse communities so that the perspectives and experiences of all students, families, and employees are recognized and addressed. The Board recognizes that the effective review, development, implementation, and monitoring of equity and inclusive education policies and practices requires the involvement of all members of the school community.

The Board is committed to the maintenance, development, and expansion of partnerships with families and diverse communities that support system and school improvement.

The Board will undertake to identify, examine, and remove barriers that exist which may prevent equitable and inclusive school-community relations.

3. Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment Practices

The Board will implement an inclusive curriculum and review resources, instruction, and assessment and evaluation practices in order to identify and address discriminatory biases so that students may maximize their learning potential by:

- a) encouraging students to learn about and enrich their understanding of other people, lifestyles, and cultures;
- b) developing and using materials that reflect the cultural and lifestyle diversity of Canada;

- c) continuing to support programs for language learning recognizing the significance of the aboriginal community in all Board schools; and
- d) reflecting Canada's and in particular northwest Ontario's diverse populations in the activities of the school (e.g., newsletters, celebrations, assemblies, concerts, displays, etc.)

4. School Climate and Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment

The Board is committed to the principle that all students enjoy equal opportunities to develop their individual abilities, self-esteem, and personal growth and that assessment, placement, and support services are equitable and inclusive to all students.

School climate welcomes all stakeholders and encourages active participation of all members of the school community in ensuring that the principles of the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy are applied in our schools. The board will commit to the principle that every person within the school community is entitled to a respectful, positive school climate and learning environment, free from all forms of discrimination and harassment.

5. Religious Accommodation

The Board recognizes and values the religious diversity within its communities and is committed to providing a safe, respectful and equitable environment for all, free from all forms of discriminatory or harassing behaviour, including those based on religion. The Board and its staff will take all reasonable steps to ensure freedom of religion and religious practices. Students and their families are encouraged to help the Board to understand their religious needs.

The Board acknowledges each individual's right to follow or not to follow religious beliefs and practices free from discriminatory or harassing behaviour.

The Board will:

- a) inform all members of the school community, including students, families, volunteers, teachers, and other board employees, of their right to request accommodation for religious beliefs and practices; and
- b) provide religious accommodation for students and staff consistent with the Ontario Human Rights Code.

6. Staff Development and Professional Learning

The Board is committed to provide administrators, staff, students, and other members of the school community with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours needed to identify and eliminate discriminatory biases and systemic barriers under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

The Board will:

- a) support the schools' use of classroom strategies that promote school-wide equity and inclusive education policies and practices;
- b) allocate resources to provide ongoing training opportunities for administrators, teachers, support staff, and trustees to participate in equity and inclusive education and leadership initiatives; and
- c) ensure that the principles of equity and inclusive education are modelled and incorporated in professional learning programs.

7. Accountability and Transparency

The Board, in respectful collaboration and communication with the whole school community, will report on its goals and progress in the areas of policy review, school improvement planning, and the implementation of the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy.

The Board will:

- a) actively communicate the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy policy to all members of the school community;
- b) establish processes to monitor progress and assess the effectiveness of policies, programs, and procedures; and
- c) report on the progress of the implementation of the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy.