

## Equity and Inclusive Education

**Adopted:**

January 18, 2011

**Last Reviewed/Revised:**

February 9, 2021 ~~June 11, 2019~~

**Next Scheduled Review:** ~~2023-2024~~ ~~2021-2022~~

**Associated Policies & Procedures:**

[VI-54 Equity and Inclusive Education](#)

[VI-60 Student Groups in Catholic Schools](#)

[I-43 Use of Technology and Digital Citizenship](#)

[VI-62 Use of Technology and Digital Citizenship](#)

[II-34 Participation in Programs and Courses of Study in Catholic Religious Education](#)

[II-39 Progressive Discipline and Safety in Schools Code of conduct – Suspensions and Expulsions](#)

[VI-44 Progressive Discipline and Safety in Schools](#)

[II-40 Bullying Prevention and Intervention](#)

[II-43 Voluntary Confidential Self-Identification of First Nation Metis and Inuit Students](#)

[V-01 Use of School Grounds and Community Use of School Facilities](#)

[VI-64 Community Use of School Facilities](#)

[V-03 Photography, Advertising and Sales Representatives](#)

[V-18 Community Engagement and Public Consultation Policy](#)

## Purpose

The Halton Catholic District School Board (~~the “Board”~~ HCDSB) 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~~ HCDSB to provide in all its operations an educational environment which supports and ~~enables~~ fosters diversity, equity and inclusion within its Catholic community.

~~The Board~~ HCDSB 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~~ HCDSB recognizes that the school system gives pre-eminence to the tenets of the Catholic faith, ~~congruent consistent~~ with the protection afforded in the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, the *Constitution Act, 1982* and confirmed in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

~~The Board~~ HCDSB and its staff are committed to the elimination of ~~discrimination systemic barriers~~ as outlined in Ontario’s ~~Education Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy~~ *Action Plan (2017)* and the Ontario Ministry of Education (the “Ministry”), and Accepting Schools Act in a manner which is consistent with the exercise of ~~the Board’s~~ HCDSB’s denominational rights under section 93 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* and as recognized at section 19 of the Ontario *Human Rights Code*.

## Application and Scope

The Equity and Inclusive Education Policy applies to all students, staff, volunteers and stakeholders of HCDSB.

*Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation, Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* and Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 (2009/2013) "Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools" identifies eight areas of focus for implementing equity and inclusive education. [Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan \(2017\)](#) builds on previous strategies to articulate the following priority action areas for boards: [School and Classroom Practices, Leadership, Governance and Human Resources and Data Collection, Integration and Reporting](#). Accepting School Act legislated elements of the Equity and Inclusive strategy and added to previous legislation regarding creating positive school climates that prevent bullying and associated disciplinary and supports protocols.

In accordance with the above policy documents, applicable legislation that outlines the denominational rights of the Catholic school system and with adherence to the *Guiding Principles of the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy*, and consistent with the Human Rights Code, each area of focus will be introduced and anchored by a preamble and [the Board's HCDSB's](#) mission statement. This will serve to guide the actions of [the Board HCDSB](#) and its schools, in honouring its commitments to equity and inclusive education policy development, implementation, monitoring and reporting.

[Procedures associated with the implementation of this policy can be found in Administrative Procedure VI-54, Equity and Inclusive Education.](#)

## References

### [Education Act](#)

[Constitution Act, 1982: Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#)

[Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy \(2009\)](#)

[Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009 – Reflective Tool](#)

[PPM 119 \(2013\) "Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools"](#)

[Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan \(2017\)](#)

[Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation \(2014\)](#)

[Bill 13, Accepting Schools Act \(2012\) Subsection 169.1](#)

[Ontario Human Rights Code](#)

[Ontario Human Rights Code: Gender Identity and Gender Expression](#)

[Anti-Racism Act 2017](#)

[Ministry Policy/Program Memorandum No. 108](#)

[Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops: Discovering the Unity of Life and Love: A reflection on the Foundations for a Theology of Human Love](#)

[Nostrae Aetate](#)

## Definitions

**Creed** - is interpreted as “religious creed” or “religion”. It is defined as a professed system and confession of faith, including both beliefs and observances of worship. Creed refers to the beliefs and practices that are sincerely held and/or observed. (Ontario Human Rights Commission’s Policy on Creed and the Accommodation of Religious Observances)

**Denominational Rights** - public funding of Ontario’s Roman Catholic school system was agreed to at the time of Confederation and was part of the Constitution Act, 1867, Section 93. (Ontario’s Ministry of Education).

**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. (Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools, 2014)

**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. (Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools, 2014)

**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. (Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009)

**Ontario Human Rights Code** - the Code prohibits actions that discriminate against people based on a protected ground in a protected social area. Some of the protected grounds include ancestry, colour, race, citizenship, ethnic origin, place of origin, creed, disability, family status, marital status, gender identity, gender expression, sex and sexual orientation. (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2018)

**Religious Accommodation** - is a duty corresponding to the right to be free from discrimination. The Code refers to the obligation to provide reasonable accommodation for students and employees who wish to observe the tenets or practices of their faith (Ontario Human Rights Commission’s Policy on Creed and the Accommodation of Religious Observances)

**Stakeholder** - any individual or group who can affect or is affected by decisions made by HCDSB.

**Systemic Barriers**- institutional and instructional practices that negatively impact the achievement and well-being of students and lead to inequitable outcomes. Systemic barriers are caused by embedded biases in policies, practices and processes, and may result in differential treatment. (Ontario’s Equity Action Plan, 2017)

## Principles

In accordance with the Church's teachings and Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, the following principles of equity and inclusive education will be upheld in all Halton Catholic District Board operations. Equity and inclusion:

- is a foundation of excellence;
- meets individual needs;
- identifies and eliminates barriers;
- promotes a sense of belonging and acceptance
- involves the broad community;
- builds on and enhances previous and existing initiatives;
- is demonstrated throughout the system.

### 1. Board Policies, Programs, Procedures and Practices:

#### Preamble:

~~The Board~~HCDSB -recognizes the importance of anti-racism and anti-harassment policies in promoting and maintaining a Catholic educational and working environment which **upholds human rights, equity and inclusion. fosters racial and ethno-cultural understanding as well as a policy which accepts and celebrates all types of diversity.**

~~The Board~~HCDSB will ensure that its policy review cycle will result in the alignment and integration of *The Strategy* and Accepting Schools Act with all ~~HCDSB Board~~ policies, programs, procedures, and practices. The perspectives of the entire diverse Catholic school community will be reflected in all areas of the teaching, learning and administrative culture. Every effort will be made to identify and remove discriminatory biases and systemic barriers that may limit access to and opportunity for effective employment procedures for individuals from diverse communities and underrepresented peoples within the context of the denominational rights of Catholic school boards. In addition, ~~the Board~~HCDSB will embed positive principles of Equity and Inclusion in all of its policies and procedures.

#### Mission Statement:

~~The Board~~HCDSB is committed to serving staff, students, and families in its diverse Catholic community by incorporating the principles of equity and inclusive education into all aspects of its policies, programs, procedures, and practices that are consistent with Catholic denominational rights.

## 2. Shared and Committed Leadership:

### Preamble:

~~The Board~~ HCDSB subscribes to an informed leadership philosophy that inspires, empowers, and supports all stakeholders in our Catholic community to join together to implement institutional practices and behaviours that ~~foster~~<sup>cultivate</sup> equity and inclusion.

HCDSB recognizes the critical role of all leaders including trustees, superintendents, principals, teachers, Designated Early Childhood Educators, Early Childhood Educators, Child and Youth Counsellors, Social Workers, in fostering inclusive, safe and welcoming learning environments and upholding human rights

~~The Board~~ HCDSB 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.

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

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 community partners.

HCDSB recognizes that having a diverse teaching workforce is vital to serve the needs of all students and communities within the board. Inequitable representation of historically disadvantaged groups in the workforce can lead to inequities in the educational experience and outcomes for excluded or marginalized students.

### Mission Statement:

~~The Board~~ HCDSB is committed to establishing and maintaining partnerships with all members of our diverse Catholic community so that the perspectives and experiences of all students are recognized and their needs are met.

## 3. School Community Relationships:

### Preamble:

~~The Board~~ HCDSB 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 entire Catholic school community. ~~The Board~~ HCDSB further recognizes the importance of engaging specialized expertise in developing and implementing its equity and inclusive education policy.

~~The Board~~ HCDSB will seek collaboration with and active engagement from students, parents/<sup>guardians</sup>, staff and other Catholic community partners to create and sustain a positive school climate reflective of Catholic values that supports student achievement.

HCDSB acknowledges the importance of increasing parent engagement in equity and inclusive education with a focus on reaching out to parents/guardians who may be disengaged from the education system.

The Board HCDSB will identify, examine, and remove any barriers that exist, preventing full participatory school-community relations including obstacles associated with any systemic discrimination.

**Mission Statement:**

The Board HCDSB is committed to establishing and maintaining partnerships with all members of our diverse Catholic community so that the perspectives and experiences of all students, families, and employees are recognized. These practices will include surveying the parents/guardians, students and staff at least once every two (2) years to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the related Equity and Inclusion programs and policies.

**4. Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment Practices:**

**Preamble:**

Both in its content and methodology, inclusive curriculum seeks to recognize our commitment to Catholic values and to affirm the life experiences of all students, regardless of race and ethnicity, gender, place of origin, religion, cultural and linguistic background, social and economic status, sexual orientation, age, and ability/disability.

Effective evaluation includes researched best practices that truly reflect the current level of achievement of the student. Multiple opportunities for assessment allow for student learning and accuracy of assessment and instruction.

Students must be represented in the curriculum and heard in the assessment and evaluation. Students' voice is fundamental in the planning for instruction and the accuracy of assessment.

HCDSB recognizes that strengthening inclusive and culturally responsive and relevant teaching, curriculum, assessment and resources is essential to promoting student achievement and wellbeing and commits to advance culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy.

HCDSB is committed to ensuring that all students achieve their potential and are supported in choosing appropriate pathways that meet their aspirations.

**Mission Statement:**

The Board HCDSB is committed to implementing an inclusive curriculum based on Catholic values and to reviewing resources, instruction, and assessment and evaluation practices in order to identify and address discriminatory biases so that each student may maximize her or his learning potential.

**5. Religious Accommodation:**

**Preamble:**

Committed to the mission of the Church, ~~the Board~~HCDSB provides a learning and working environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability, in accordance with the Ontario *Human Rights Code* and Ministry Policy/Program Memorandum No. 108.

Within the framework of gospel values, traditions, and ~~the Board's~~HCDSB's denominational rights, in recognition of this diversity, ~~the Board~~HCDSB will take reasonable steps to provide reasonable accommodation for students' and staffs' religious beliefs and practices, while also protecting its denominational rights. (See Religious Accommodation Appendix "A" and "B" attached)

**Mission Statement:**

~~The Board~~HCDSB is committed to the values of freedom of religion and freedom from discriminatory or harassing behaviour based on religion and will take all reasonable steps to provide religious accommodations within the legal rights afforded to the Catholic school system.

**6. School Climate and the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment:**

**Preamble:**

~~The Board~~HCDSB recognizes that a safe and welcoming environment is most conducive to learning. ~~The Board~~HCDSB will therefore seek to foster a Christ-centred, positive school climate, free from discriminatory or harassing behaviour. ~~The Board~~HCDSB 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.

The principles of equity and inclusion are consistent with Catholic doctrine and must be considered and applied in employing progressive disciplinary measures, particularly when it is necessary to take into account mitigating and other factors (~~Please see~~ Policy II-40 Bullying Prevention and Intervention, Policy II-39 Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour and Administrative Procedure VI-44 Progressive Discipline for the operating policies that direct preventing and handling situations of bullying, discrimination and harassment).

HCDSB is committed to providing an educational environment that is respectful of the human rights of staff, students and families. HCDSB recognizes the need for building a culture of respect for human rights by establishing and reviewing human rights policies and procedures, consistent with the Ontario Human Rights Code and consistent with the exercise of HCDSB's denominational rights as outlined in section 93 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

HCDSB recognizes the need for regular, ongoing training and accessible information on human rights, indigeneity, anti-racism, anti-Black racism, and anti-oppression for staff and students to identify and eliminate systemic barriers and uphold a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment for all stakeholders.

**Mission Statement:**

~~The Board~~HCDSB 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.

## 7. Professional Learning:

### Preamble:

The ~~Staff~~staff of ~~the Board~~HCDSB is its most important asset and is the vehicle by which Catholicity and equity are taught in the classroom and throughout the system. ~~The Board~~HCDSB, therefore, recognizes the importance of ongoing professional learning to create a foundation for Catholic values, ecclesial and cultural identity, human rights education and effective teaching practices that promote ~~Equity~~equity and ~~Inclusion~~inclusion.

Professional learning increases the knowledge and skills that teachers bring to the craft and science of teaching, and, thus, engages the student with increasing complexity and precision teaching. Perpetual professional learning is the groundwork for positive changes in our schools. Professional learning must include knowledge creation and knowledge sharing (Earl and Katz, 2005) to ensure that all voices are represented and that we recognize that there is no essential knowledge but rather a continued quest towards deeper representation of all with our knowledge base.

Distributed, deep and sustained changes in practice and structures in school are key elements of professional learning and have impact on student learning, engagement and success in a knowledge society (Earl and Katz, 2005). Professional Learning works to engage all learners and strives for student success and includes the following:

- a) Changes in thinking and practices of teachers
- b) Collaborative inquiry at various levels within the school
- c) Pursuit of innovation (Katz, Earl and Jaafar, 2009)

### Mission Statement:

~~The Board~~HCDSB is committed to providing the school community, including students, with ongoing opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours needed to identify and eliminate discriminatory biases and systemic barriers under the *Code*, and strategies for promoting positive school climates.

## 8. Accountability and Transparency

### Preamble:

~~The Board~~HCDSB acknowledges and assumes the responsibility for its policies, actions, and decisions. In the pursuit of greater transparency and accountability, ~~the Board~~HCDSB, in respectful collaboration and communication with the whole Catholic school community, will report on its goals and progress in the areas of policy review, school improvement planning and the implementation of *The Strategy*. In accordance with Accepting School Act, ~~the Board~~HCDSB will survey parents, staff and students once every two (2) years to assess the effectiveness of the related ~~Equity~~equity and ~~Inclusions~~inclusion policies, procedures and programs.



**Mission Statement:**

The Board HCDSB is committed to assessing and monitoring its progress in implementing *The 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.

The Director of Education will develop procedures required to implement this policy and provide an annual report to the Board of Trustees on the efficacy of the related policies, procedures and programs. Board multi-year plans will include the goals set out in Accepting Schools Act around positive school climate and bullying prevention as it relates to Equity and inclusion along with supports for students and awareness opportunities for parents.

**Data Collection, Integration and Reporting**

HCDSB supports the need for collecting and analyzing voluntary student demographic data and perceptual data to address barriers to student success.

As mandated by the Anti-Racism Act 2017, HCDSB commits to student demographic data collection to identify and eliminate disproportionalities and disparities in student achievement and wellbeing (e.g. graduation, suspensions and expulsions, program enrolment).

HCDSB recognizes that collection and analysis of staff demographic data at all levels along with identification and removal of systemic barriers consistent with HCDSB’s denominational rights, is required for equitable recruitment, hiring, promotion and professional development strategies. Enhanced data collection and outcome measurement support evidence-based decision making.

All data collection, research, surveys and census will be developed, collected and disseminated using an equity and inclusion lens – to ensure participation and representation of individuals from diverse communities.

**Requirements**

Information and Instruction with Respect to Equity and Inclusive Education Policy:

HCDSB will provide staff with information and instruction that is appropriate for the employee on the contents of the policy

**Responsibility:**

The Director of Education holds primary responsibility for overseeing and implementing this policy.

APPROVED: Regular Meeting of the Board

AUTHORIZED BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Chair of the Board*