



EQUITY POLICY

Projected Review Date: TBD

POLICY STATEMENT

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to the principles of equity through inclusive programs, curriculum, services, and operations, in accordance with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Education Act.

- RESPONSIBILITY:**
- ◆ Superintendent Responsible for Equity
 - ◆ Executive Council



EQUITY POLICY

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE EQUITY POLICY

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 1.0 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to ensuring equity in all policies, guidelines and operating practices. The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will review this commitment annually.
- 2.0 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to providing leadership, at all levels, that fosters an equitable environment.
- 3.0 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will recognize and promote active participation from all members of school communities in order to maintain and affect equitable education policies, practices and outcomes.
- 4.0 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will support curriculum, learning materials and school practices which reflect and include the principles of equity, as regulated by the Ministry of Education.
- 5.0 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will affirm and value students' first languages, while providing their students with the opportunity to acquire competence in Canada's first languages.
- 6.0 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will strive to provide appropriate and bias free assessment, evaluation, reporting, placement, and programming to equitably meet the educational needs and to maximize the learning potential of all students.
- 7.0 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide counseling/guidance/support services that reflect the principles of equity.
- 8.0 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will ensure that harassment towards diverse communities by trustees, employees, parents, volunteers, students, and the community at large will not be tolerated.
- 9.0 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's employment policies, practices and procedures will be non-discriminatory, fair and equitable.
- 10.0 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide equity training and resources for trustees and all employee groups.

EQUITY POLICY-SUPPORTING GUIDELINES: ANTIRACISM AND ETHNOCULTURAL EQUITY

1.0 POLICIES, GUIDELINES AND PRACTICES

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to ensuring that all policies, guidelines and operating practices actively demonstrate a respect for Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural, and religious differences.

Commitment to Equity

- 1.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will clearly articulate, through existing and new policies, guidelines and operating practices, a commitment to reflecting the ideals of antiracism and ethnocultural equity.
- 1.2 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will establish practices and procedures that will ensure compliance with its policy of antiracism and ethnocultural equity and make sure the policy is accessible to all employees, students, parents, and the community at large.

Accountability

- 1.3 To ensure accountability, the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will develop a framework to process the implementation of the policy on an annual basis.

2.0 LEADERSHIP

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to providing leadership at all levels that fosters an environment of respect for Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural, and religious differences.

Commitment to Equity

- 2.1 The leadership of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will promote an awareness of antiracism and ethnocultural equity issues throughout the Board's jurisdiction.

Staff Development

- 2.2 The leadership of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide learning opportunities regarding antiracism and ethnocultural equity on an annual basis.

Removal of Barriers

- 2.3 The leadership of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will identify and remove inequities and barriers related to all aspects of human resource activity in accordance with provincial and federal legislation.

- 2.4 The leadership of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will apply antiracism and ethnocultural equity guiding principles to daily operations of schools.

3.0 SCHOOL COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will recognize and promote active participation from all members of school communities that reflect Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural and religious diversity in order to maintain and affect equitable education policies, practices and outcomes.

Commitment to Equity

- 3.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will promote open dialogue and partnership with parents and community groups.

Cultural Interpretation

- 3.2 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will recognize the cultural and language needs of all the members of the school community. Language translation and cultural interpretive services will be used to facilitate first-language communication when there is inadequate comprehension of the official languages.

Removal of Barriers

- 3.3 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will open channels of communication to enable community representatives from Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural, and religious communities to be involved in the development, implementation and review of the Board's policies.
- 3.4 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will ensure that each school staff, school council and/or existing parent group encourages community contribution and participation in planning activities/programs for schools.

4.0 CURRICULUM

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will support curriculum, learning materials and school practices that reflect and include the principles of antiracism and ethnocultural equity, as regulated by the Ministry of Education.

Commitment to Equity

- 4.1 Committees responsible for curriculum development, implementation and evaluation will strive to include the involvement of the Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural, and religious diversity of staff, students, their families and the community at large.
- 4.2 All elements in the process of curriculum review, development and implementation will be consistent with the principles of antiracism and ethnocultural equity.

- 4.3 As learning experiences are developed and/or modified, staff will strive to accurately reflect Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural, and religious diversity.
- 4.4 Curriculum policies, programs and learning materials will strive to include the perspectives and knowledges of Indigenous Peoples and the minoritized. All stakeholders will share in this responsibility.
- 4.5 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will strive to provide students with opportunities to critically examine issues of exclusivity/inclusivity, bias, discrimination and racism.

5.0 STUDENT LANGUAGES

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will affirm and value students' first languages, while providing their students with the opportunity to acquire competence in Canada's official languages.

Commitment to Equity

- 5.1 First languages, including Aboriginal languages shall be valued and respected.
- 5.2 All students will have the opportunity to develop literacy in at least one official language.
- 5.3 Support programs will be provided to facilitate and promote official language learning.

6.0 STUDENT ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION, REPORTING AND PLACEMENT

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will strive to provide appropriate and bias free assessment, evaluation, reporting, placement, and programming to equitably meet the educational needs and to maximize the learning potential of all students.

Commitment to Equity

- 6.1 Assessment, evaluation, reporting, placement and programming practices will strive to eliminate bias towards the Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural, and religious communities and shall take into account the students' previous education and personal experiences, and shall be designed to meet the needs of the individual student.
- 6.2 Students and/or parents/guardians will be informed of all procedures and have the opportunity to be involved in the processes of registration, assessment, evaluation, reporting and placement.
- 6.3 Placement decisions will be open to re-examination in order to maximize each student's educational and career opportunities.

7.0 COUNSELLING/GUIDANCE/SUPPORT SERVICES

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide counselling/guidance/support services that reflect the principles of antiracism and ethnocultural equity.

Commitment to Equity

- 7.1 All programs and services which address students' personal needs, as well as their academic and career choices will be delivered in a manner which is free of stereotyping towards the Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural, and religious communities.
- 7.2 Programs and services will be reviewed and developed in partnership amongst school and home and may include community, business and industry and will reflect Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural, and religious diversity.
- 7.3 Counselling/guidance/support services will seek alternative services and community partnerships to meet the needs of the Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural, and religious diversity of students when appropriate.

Cultural Interpretation

- 7.4 Communication strategies, which may include cultural and language interpretation services, will be in place to facilitate parent/guardian involvement in students' academic achievement, social and emotional development, discipline, and future direction.

8.0 RACIAL AND ETHNOCULTURAL HARASSMENT

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will ensure that harassment towards Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural or religious communities by trustees, employees, parents, volunteers, students and the community at large will not be tolerated.

Staff

- 8.1 Effective policies and procedures will be in place for reporting, responding to and resolving incidents of harassment towards members of the Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural or religious communities. Every individual has the right to report harassment without fear of reprisal and every complaint shall be investigated confidentially in order to protect the rights of all individuals.

Staff Development

- 8.2 Through professional development opportunities, The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide staff with the knowledge, skills, and resources to effectively identify and respond to harassment.
- 8.3 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide information to all trustees, employees, parents, volunteers, students and the community at large, in respect to the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's Policy Against Harassment.

Accountability

- 8.4 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will ensure that the process for addressing harassment towards the members of Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural, or religious communities is implemented, and that a process of accountability is in place for all trustees, employees, parents, volunteers, students and the community at large.

9.0 EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's employment policies, practices and procedures will be fair and equitable, and will not discriminate based on Aboriginal status, race, ethnicity, culture or religion.

Commitment to Equity

- 9.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's recruitment, interview, selection, training, placement, and promotion practices and procedures will not discriminate against members of Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural, or religious communities and will not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, culture or religion.
- 9.2 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will strive to modify interview teams to reflect the Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural, and religious diversity within the community at large.
- 9.3 The procedures for progressive discipline, performance appraisal, review and reporting will be free of bias towards the members of the Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural, and religious communities.
- 9.4 Human Resources practices, policies and procedures will be a part of the annual report and reviewed for bias regularly.

10.0 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide antiracism and ethnocultural equity training and resources for trustees and all employee groups.

System Level

- 10.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will identify staff development needs to enable those responsible for implementing the Board's antiracism and ethnocultural policy to have or develop the knowledge, skills and resources to carry out the mandate.
- 10.2 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will implement professional development programs based on identified needs to enable trustees and staff to understand the manifestations of racism and to respond effectively to issues of harassment towards the members of Aboriginal, racial, ethnocultural, or religious communities.
- 10.3 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide teaching staff with the knowledge, skills and resources needed to teach from an antiracism perspective. This will enable educators to

recognize and examine biased and discriminatory material and to facilitate the incorporation of the perspectives and knowledges of Indigenous Peoples and the minoritized in the curriculum.

10.4 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will involve community groups and employee groups in the development and implementation of in-service programs and staff development programs.

10.5 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will require all employees and trustees to broaden their knowledge of antiracism and ethnocultural equity through courses, workshops and community consultation.

EQUITY POLICY-SUPPORTING GUIDELINES: ANTI-CLASSISM AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC EQUITY

1.0 POLICIES, GUIDELINES AND PRACTICES

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to ensuring Equity in all policies, guidelines and operating practices. The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will review this commitment annually.

Commitment to Equity

- 1.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to ensuring that all policies, guidelines and operating practices actively demonstrate a respect for the principles of anti-classism and socio-economic equity.
- 1.2 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will clearly articulate, through existing and new policies, guidelines and operating practices, a commitment to socio-economic equity.
- 1.3 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will establish practices and procedures that will ensure compliance with the policy and guidelines of anti-classism and socio-economic equity and ensure the Equity Policy and Supporting Guidelines: Anti-classism and Socio-economic Equity are accessible to all employees, students, parents, and the community at large.
- 1.4 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will continue to acknowledge the needs addressed by the Compensatory Education program and that:
 - Not all school communities are equal in their ability to support their students;
 - Schools can make a difference in overcoming the education effects of a disadvantaged community;
 - Senior and school administrations are to be encouraged and supported in their efforts to provide additional support and consideration to identified schools.

Accountability

- 1.5 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will establish a review process to monitor and assess the effectiveness of community consultation, partnership and involvement in the application of the Equity Policy and Supporting Guidelines: Anti-classism and Socio-economic Equity.

2.0 LEADERSHIP

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to providing leadership at all levels that fosters an equitable environment.

Commitment to Equity

- 2.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to providing leadership at all levels that fosters an environment of respect for all people regardless of socio-economic status.
- 2.2 The leadership of The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will raise awareness of anti-classism and socio-economic equity throughout the Board jurisdiction.

Accountability

- 2.3 The leadership of The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will ensure that anti-classism and socio-economic equity are part of the Strategic Directions and will provide opportunities for implementation of equity education as it pertains to anti-classism and socio-economic equity by developing implementation plans to provide inclusive social and academic school environments for all students.

Removal of Barriers

- 2.4 The leadership of The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will identify and remove inequities and barriers related to the System, School and Service Improvement Planning process, as well as employment practices and salaries.

3.0 SCHOOL COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will recognize and promote active participation with all members of school communities in order to maintain and affect equitable education policies, practices and outcomes.

Commitment to Equity

- 3.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will recognize that schools consist of different socio-economic communities and will foster open dialogue and open partnerships with parents and community groups within the school and community.

Removal of Barriers

- 3.2 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will promote active participation with the community and will identify and address barriers related to socio-economic status that interfere with community participation in events.
- 3.3 Schools will have an understanding and sensitivity to their school communities with regards to financial requests for school trips, extracurricular activities and fundraising.

Cultural Interpretation

- 3.4 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will recognize the language needs of all the members of the school community. Language translation and cultural interpretive services will be used to facilitate first language communication when there is inadequate comprehension of official languages.

- 3.5 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will ensure that open channels of communication exist to enable community representatives from the diverse school community to be involved in the development, implementation, application and review of the Board's policies.
- 3.6 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will ensure that each school staff and school council encourages community contribution and participation in planning events and extra-curricular activities for schools.

4.0 CURRICULUM

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will support curriculum, learning materials and school practices, which reflect and include the principles of equity, as regulated by the Ministry of Education.

Commitment to Equity

- 4.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will address the learning needs of students from working poor and socio-economically marginalized communities who are disadvantaged by classism in the existing curriculum.
- 4.2 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will endeavour to deliver program, provide learning materials and best practices in all subject areas that reflect a balance of perspectives and include a diversity of experiences reflecting working poor and socio-economically marginalized communities.
- 4.3 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will ensure that teachers have access to varied resources which value and respect the contributions, experiences, and histories of working poor and socio-economically marginalized communities.

Staff Development

- 4.4 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide teachers with training to examine teaching materials for discriminatory bias related to classism and socio-economic status in existing learning materials, programs, or practices. This training will enable teachers to promote critical thinking skills about classism and to challenge bias and stereotypical assumptions based on socio-economic status.

5.0 STUDENT LANGUAGES

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will affirm and value students' first languages, while providing their students with the opportunity to acquire competence in Canada's first languages.

Commitment to Equity

- 5.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board respects and values all cultures and languages.

- 5.2 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board does not seek to replace its students' home languages, but rather will strive to develop the English language capacities of all its students.
- 5.3 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide specialized programming and enriched English language opportunities that will allow students the opportunity to reach their full academic potential.
- 5.4 Teaching practices at The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will recognize the existence and appropriate use of different dialects and registers of English. However, Standard English will be regarded as the register of the formal curriculum.

Cultural Interpretation

- 5.5 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will endeavour, when possible, to communicate with students and their parents in their first language. It will also communicate in a jargon-free form of English.

6.0 STUDENT ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION, REPORTING AND PLACEMENT

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will strive to provide appropriate and bias free assessment, evaluation, reporting, placement, and programming to equitably meet the educational needs and to maximize the learning potential of all students.

Commitment to Equity

- 6.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will have the same high expectations for all its students. It will ensure that working poor and socio-economically marginalized students' potentials are not underestimated based on bias and stereotypical assumptions related to socio-economic status. They will have opportunities to participate in programs that reflect their highest potential.
- 6.2 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's placement and programming practices will be free of classism; will take into account the students' previous education and personal experiences; and will be designed to meet the needs of the individual student.
- 6.3 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will work to provide appropriate, multifaceted and bias free evaluation, reporting and assessment.

Removal of Barriers

- 6.4 The Hamilton Wentworth District School Board will endeavour to identify discriminatory barriers that prevent working poor and socio-economically marginalized students from reaching their academic potential and will demonstrate an effort to eliminate these barriers.
- 6.5 The Hamilton Wentworth District School Board will ensure that parents and guardians are provided with the information required to make decisions regarding program and placement procedures.

7.0 COUNSELLING/GUIDANCE/SUPPORT SERVICES

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide counselling/guidance/support services that reflect the principles of equity.

Removal of Barriers

- 7.1 To ensure that the potential of students from working poor and socio-economically marginalized communities will not be underestimated; the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide counselling/guidance/support services free of bias and stereotypical assumptions based on socio-economic status.
- 7.2 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's counselling/guidance/support services will encourage students from working poor and socio-economically marginalized communities to explore career options that have traditionally excluded them.

Commitment to Equity

- 7.3 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will put into place proactive strategies and/or programs to identify At-Risk Students, from working poor and socio-economically marginalized communities, and to encourage their continued attendance at school. Also, the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will put into place strategies to support school re-entry for Early School Leavers.
- 7.4 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will mobilize Board and Community resources to assist students from working poor and socio-economically marginalized communities in reaching their full potential.

Cultural Interpretation

- 7.5 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide communication strategies, which may include cultural and language interpretation services, to facilitate parent/guardian involvement in students' academic achievement, social and emotional development, discipline, and future direction.

8.0 HARASSMENT

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will ensure that harassment towards diverse communities by trustees, employees, parents, volunteers, students and the community at large will not be tolerated.

Staff

- 8.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's Harassment Policy will be applied for reporting, responding to and resolving incidents of harassment based on classism and socio-economic status. Every individual has the right to report harassment without fear of reprisal and every complaint will be investigated confidentially in order to protect the rights of all individuals.

Students

- 8.2 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's Safe Schools Policy will be applied when the principles of Anti-classism and Socio-economic equity are not respected.

Community

- 8.3 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will ensure that a process for addressing harassment on the basis of socio-economic status, particularly towards members of the working poor and socio-economically marginalized community, is implemented, and that a process of accountability is in place for all trustees, employees, parents, volunteers, students and the community at large.

Staff Development

- 8.4 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide all staff with professional development opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills to effectively identify and respond to harassment based on socio-economic status.

9.0 EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's employment policies, practices and procedures will be non-discriminatory, fair and equitable.

- 9.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will endeavour to provide recruitment, interview, selection, training, placement, and promotion practices and procedures that are inclusive and that do not discriminate on the basis of socio-economic status.
- 9.2 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will endeavour to provide interview teams that have an understanding and sensitivity towards classism and socio-economic equity.
- 9.3 The procedures for progressive discipline, performance appraisal, review and reporting will be as free as possible from bias and stereotypical assumptions based on socio-economic status.

10.0 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide equity training and resources for trustees and all employee groups.

System Level

- 10.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will make available staff development programs that enable staff to identify and challenge biases, stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination based on classism and socio-economic status.

- 10.2 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide staff with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to teach, work and learn from a perspective that is free from classism and to challenge bias and stereotypical assumptions based on socio-economic status.
- 10.3 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will create staff development initiatives that will allow its employees to identify and examine bias and stereotypical assumptions based on socio-economic status as it relates to evaluation, reporting, assessment and placement.

School Level

- 10.4 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide additional, focussed staff development in schools that have been identified as having specific needs based on the socio-economic demographics of its catchment area.

EQUITY POLICY-SUPPORTING GUIDELINES: SEXUAL ORIENTATION

1.0 POLICIES, GUIDELINES AND PRACTICES

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to ensuring equity in all policies, guidelines and operating practices. The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will review this commitment annually.

Commitment to Equity

- 1.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to ensuring that all policies, guidelines, procedures and practices including but not limited to classroom practices, day-to-day operations and communication practices, are anti-homophobic and anti-heterosexist.
- 1.2 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to identifying and eliminating homophobic and heterosexual biases and barriers in Board policies, guidelines, day to day operations protocol, and practice
- 1.3 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will establish practices and procedures to ensure compliance with the Equity Policy Supporting Guidelines: Sexual Orientation.

Accountability

- 1.4 The Hamilton- Wentworth District School Board will establish a review process and timeframe to monitor and assess the effectiveness of Equity Policy Supporting Guidelines: Sexual Orientation which will include community consultation.

2.0 LEADERSHIP

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to providing leadership, at all levels, that fosters an equitable environment.

Commitment to Equity

- 2.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to providing leadership at all levels that fosters an environment of respect for all people regardless of sexual orientation and will endeavour to raise awareness of issues related to sexual orientation and equity throughout the Board jurisdiction.

Accountability

- 2.2 The leadership of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, as part of its Strategic Directions will provide opportunities and support implementation of equity education and initiatives as they pertain to sexual orientation. This will be reflected in implementation plans and school/service improvement plans to ensure inclusive environments for students, staff and community.

- 2.3 The leadership of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will strive to ensure that educational practices are inclusive and reflect the contributions of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities and that all forms of stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, and homophobia and violence against these communities are challenged and eliminated.

3.0 SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will recognize and promote active participation from all members of school communities in order to maintain and affect equitable education policies, practices and outcomes.

Commitment to Equity

- 3.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board recognizes that school communities include people who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender and will promote active engagement with these communities to ensure inclusive school community partnerships.

Removal of Barriers

- 3.2 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board acknowledges that there are barriers which may prevent full participation in school-community partnerships by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities. Through engagement with these communities, the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will identify and remove unlawful barriers that do exist.
- 3.3 School councils and other -school initiatives or activities endorsed by or affiliated with the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will be welcoming to parents/guardians and caregivers of all sexual orientations.

4.0 CURRICULUM

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will support curriculum, learning materials and school practices which reflect and include the principles of equity, as regulated by the Ministry of Education.

Commitment to Equity

- 4.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will strive to ensure that curriculum delivery in all subject areas is consistent with the principles and practices of Equity as they relate to sexual orientation. The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will honour this commitment by:
- Ensuring that its staff has access to a wide variety of bias-free teaching and learning materials;
 - Supporting staff who choose to use learning materials with themes, topics or characters that reflect the diversity of sexual orientations;
 - Ensuring that best practice, age and developmentally appropriate teaching and learning strategies are used to address the topic of sexual orientation;
 - Ensuring that its facilities are spaces in which Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender students can participate in learning experiences without fear of harassment.

- 4.2 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will strive to deliver program, provide learning materials and promote best practices in all accepted subject matter that reflects a balance of perspectives and includes a diversity of experiences including those of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgender communities.
- 4.3 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will ensure staff delivers curriculum and provides learning experiences that are free from homophobia and heterosexism.

Staff Development

- 4.4 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide staff with professional development to examine teaching practices and learning experiences for discriminatory bias related to heterosexism.
- 4.5 Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board staff will develop student critical thinking skills about heterosexism to enable students to challenge bias and stereotypical assumptions.

5.0 STUDENT LANGUAGES

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will affirm and value students' first languages, while providing their students with the opportunity to acquire competence in Canada's first languages.

Commitment to Equity

- 5.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board values and respects all languages and cultures.
- 5.2 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will ensure that both its communication practices and communications with staff, students, parents/guardians and the community at large will be free from heterosexism and homophobia.

Cultural Interpreters

- 5.3 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will ensure that resources are available to schools and departments to enable appropriate communications with staff, students, parents/guardians and the community at large.
- 5.4 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide language learning programming that is free from heterosexism and homophobia.

6.0 STUDENT ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION REPORTING AND PLACEMENT

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will strive to provide appropriate and bias free assessment, evaluation, reporting, placement, and programming to equitably meet the educational needs and to maximize the learning potential of all students.

Commitment to Equity

- 6.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will ensure that its assessment, evaluation, reporting and placement practices and procedures are free from heterosexism and homophobia.
- 6.2 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will ensure that its placement and programming practices and procedures are free from discriminatory biases related to gender roles and sexual orientation. Further, it will ensure that assessment, evaluation, reporting and placement decisions meet individual student needs and offer students opportunities to reach their highest potential.

Removal of Barriers

- 6.3 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will endeavour to identify and eliminate discrimination and unlawful barriers by identifying, reviewing and changing practices that lead to the streaming of students into programs on the basis of sexual orientation.
- 6.4 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will collaborate with students and parents/caregivers by informing them of assessment, evaluation, reporting and placement practices and procedures. This collaboration includes making and re-evaluating placement decisions.

7.0 COUNSELLING/GUIDANCE/SUPPORT SERVICES

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide counseling/guidance/support services that reflect the principles of equity.

Commitment to Equity

- 7.1 All Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board programs addressing students' personal needs, as well as their academic and career choices, will be delivered in a manner that is free from heterosexism and homophobia.
- 7.2 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will ensure that Counselling/Guidance and Support Services are free from discriminatory biases related to sexual orientation and gender identity. Further, it will strive to include representation from Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender students, families and community organizations in program development and review processes.
- 7.3 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will ensure that its Counselling, Guidance and Support Service programs do not underestimate the potential of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender students because of discriminatory bias and stereotyping related to sexual orientation.

- 7.5 The confidentiality and privacy of the students accessing and utilizing these services will be protected within the boundaries of existing legal framework.
- 7.6 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will use communication practices that are free from heterosexism and homophobia to facilitate parent/guardian involvement in matters relating to their child's academic achievement, social and emotional development, behaviour and future direction.

8.0 HARRASMENT

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will ensure that harassment towards diverse communities by trustees, employees, parents, volunteers, students, and the community at large will not be tolerated.

Commitment to Equity

- 8.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's Harassment and/or Safe Schools Policies will be applied for reporting, responding to and resolving incidents of harassment based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Every individual has the right to report harassment without fear of reprisal. Every complaint will be investigated in confidence to the extent permitted by law and in accordance with the principles of natural justice in order to protect the rights of all individuals.

Staff Development

- 8.2 Through professional development, the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide staff with the knowledge, skills and resources to identify and respond to harassment on the basis of sexual orientation.
- 8.3 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will communicate its commitment to safe schools and workplaces for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender persons by ensuring that Staff, Trustees, students, parent/guardians and community members are aware of its Harassment Policy, Safe Schools Policy and Equity Policy as they relate to sexual orientation.

Accountability

- 8.4 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will develop an accountability process to monitor and report instances of harassment on the basis of sexual orientation.

9.0 EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's employment policies, practices and procedures will be non-discriminatory, fair and equitable.

Commitment to Equity

- 9.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's recruitment, interview, selection, training, placement and promotion policies, practices and procedures will be fair and equitable and will not discriminate based on sexual orientation.

Removal of Barriers

- 9.2 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will endeavour to identify and eliminate systemic barriers related to sexual orientation in its recruitment, employment and promotion practices.
- 9.3 The procedures for progressive discipline, performance appraisal, review and reporting will be free from bias and stereotypical assumptions based on sexual orientation.
- 9.4 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will endeavour to ensure that the sexual orientations of its staff remain confidential and protected.

10.0 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Guiding Principle

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide equity training and resources for trustees and all employee groups.

Commitment to Equity

- 10.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will implement professional development programs based on identified needs to enable trustees and staff to understand, identify and address bias, stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination based upon heterosexism and homophobia.
- 10.2 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide staff with the professional development, information, skills and resources needed to teach, work and learn from a perspective that is free from heterosexism and homophobia.
- 10.3 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide staff development to enable staff to challenge bias and stereotypical assumptions based on heterosexism and homophobia.
- 10.4 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide staff development to assist all staff in creating physically, emotionally, socially, intellectually and spiritually safe learning environments for all students.
- 10.5 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will consult, as Board officials deem appropriate, members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities in the design and implementation of staff development programs related to Equity and sexual orientation.

GLOSSARY

The following are key terms in the area of equity pertinent to this document.

Aboriginal Peoples

The Indigenous Peoples (the original inhabitants) of Canada and their descendants. Aboriginal peoples include the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada.

Accountability

Refers to the process whereby organizations and institutions as members of a diverse community are subject to the obligation to maintain a certain level of ethics and responsiveness and reporting regarding the quality, effectiveness and relevance of their service or practices and the method of delivery.

Refer to: Strengthening Hamilton's Community Initiative, *Anti-Racism Framework*, 2003.

Annual System Initiatives

Priorities established by The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board for each school year.

Anti-classism and Socio-economic Equity

Akin to antiracism, the principles of Anti-classism and Socio-economic Equity strive to ameliorate the effects of classism and discrimination based upon socio-economic status. Specifically, Anti-classism and Socio-economic Equity initiatives attempt to provide equality of outcome by removing barriers impeding access to goods and services for marginalized socio-economic groups.

Antiracism Education

An approach to education that integrates the perspectives and knowledges of Indigenous Peoples and racial, ethnic, cultural and religious groups into an educational system and its practices. The aim of antiracism education is the elimination of racism in all its forms. Antiracism education seeks to identify and change educational policies, procedures, and practices that foster racism, as well as the racist attitudes and behaviour that underlie and reinforce such policies and practices. Antiracism education provides teachers and students with the knowledge and skills to examine racism critically in order to understand how it originates and to identify and respond to it.

At-Risk Students

The Chairs of the Expert Panels on Students at Risk in *Building Pathways to Success: The Report of the Program Pathways for Students at Risk Work Group*, Toronto, 2003 defined At-Risk students as:

- Elementary students who are performing at level 1, or below grade expectations;
- Secondary students who would have studied at the Modified or Basic level in the previous curriculum;
- Secondary students who are performing significantly below the provincial standard, earning marks in the 50s and low 60s and who do not have the foundations to be successful in the new curriculum;
- Students who are disengaged, with very poor attendance;

Committee would like to add "Students at-risk of not graduating or successfully entering the workplace" to the Ministry definition above.

Barriers

Barriers are policies, procedures or practices that prevent equality of access and outcome. They can be both systemic and individual.

Best Practice

A best practice is “a working method or set of working methods, which is officially accepted as being the best to use in a particular business or industry, usually described in detail.

Refer to: *Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary*

Bias

An inaccurate, limited and fixed view of the world, or of a given situation, individuals or groups. A bias against or towards members of a particular racial, ethnic, cultural, or religious group can be expressed through speech, nonverbal behaviour and written and other media.

Class

Relative social rank in terms of income, wealth, status and/or power.

Refer to: M. Adams, L. Bell, P. Griffin, *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook* New York, 1997.

Classism

Practices and beliefs that place different value (worth) on people because of their socio-economic class, and an economic system that creates inequality between socio-economic groups.

Refer to: Peel District School Board’s *Go Beyond Words*

Community Consultation

A formal or informal dialogue with the community.

Community Partnerships

Collaborative relationships between institutions and groups within the community in which there is recognition of the experience of participants and evidence of their involvement in the decision making of the institutions.

Counselling/Guidance/Support Services

The process whereby skilled and informed persons assist in the resolution of difficulties and/or choosing of options which are in the best interests of an individual or group.

Cultural Identity

Cultural identity refers to (a) the collective self-awareness that a given group embodies and reflects (e.g. racial, ethnic, gender groups) and (b) the “identity of the individual in relation to his or her culture”.

Refer to: Carl E. James, *Seeing Ourselves: Exploring Race, Ethnicity and Culture*, Toronto, Canada, 1995.

Culture

Culture is the totality of ideas, beliefs, values, knowledge, and way of life of a group of people who share a certain historical background. Manifestations of culture include art, laws, institutions, and customs. Culture changes continually and, as a result, often contains elements of conflict and opposition.

Refer to: Ministry of Education, *Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation*, 1993.

Curriculum

Curriculum encompasses all learning experiences the student will have in school. These include school environment, interactions among students, staff and the community, and the values, attitudes and behaviours conveyed by the school.

Discrimination

The unequal treatment of non-dominant groups or individuals, either by a person a group or an institution with dominant identity which, through the denial of certain rights, results in inequality, subordination and/or deprivation of political, educational, social economic and cultural rights.

Refer to: Fran Endicott and Alok Mukherjee, *A Glossary of Terms*.

Early School Leavers

Colloquially known as “dropouts”, Early School Leavers are students who have ceased to attend secondary school without achieving an Ontario Secondary School Diploma, Ontario Secondary School Certificate or Certificate of Accomplishment.

Employment Equity

A program designed to remove systemic barriers to equality of outcome in employment by identifying and eliminating discriminatory policies and practices, remedying the effects of past discrimination, and ensuring appropriate representation of designated groups. Employment equity programs usually involve setting goals and timelines in order to ensure that defined objectives are met by a specified date.

Equity

Equity refers to right of individuals to an equitable share of the goods and services in society. In order to ensure equality of access and outcome, equity programs may treat groups differently when the situation in society precludes equal treatment. Equity programs are designed to identify and eliminate barriers to equality. Often, Equity programs are more inclined to accept the priority of collective rights over individual rights.

Refer to: Strengthening Hamilton’s Community Initiative, *Anti-Racism Framework, 2003* and Ministry of Education, *Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation, 1993*.

Ethnic

Pertaining to ethnicity.

Ethnicity

Like race, is socially, politically and historically constructed, and is subject to the ambiguities and contradictions that are to be found in societies. It is dynamic. Its meanings change over time. Nevertheless, ethnicity serves to establish status allocation, role expectations and group membership.

Refer to: Carl E. James, *Seeing Ourselves: Exploring Race, Ethnicity and Culture*, Toronto, 1995.

Ethnocultural Group

A group of people who share a particular cultural heritage or background. Every Canadian belongs to an ethnic group. Refer to terms ethnicity and culture.

Eurocentric Curriculum

A curriculum that focuses primarily on the experiences and achievements of people of European background. Such a curriculum inevitably marginalizes the experiences and achievements of people of other backgrounds.

First Languages

A person's native language or mother tongue.

Refer to: *The Oxford Canadian Dictionary*, 1998

Heterosexism

Heterosexism is used to refer to the assumption that everyone is heterosexual. This definition is often used in the context of discrimination against bisexual, lesbian and gay people that is less overt, and which may be unintentional and unrecognized by the person or organization responsible for the discrimination. It can also be useful in understanding and identifying some kinds of institutional or societal bias, although homophobia may also be at play.

Refer to: *the Ontario Human Rights Code (2005). Part I - The Context: Sexual Orientation, Human Rights Protections, Case Law and Legislation. Policy on Sexual Orientation*

Homophobia

Homophobia is the fear and hatred of lesbians and gay men, or any behaviour that falls outside of perceived traditional gender roles. Homophobic acts may include but are not limited to name-calling, shunning/exclusion and the promotion of hatred and violence targeting lesbian and gay individuals and/or groups.

Indigenous Knowledges

The knowledges of the first founding peoples that have been shared through an oral tradition.

Indigenous Peoples

First founding peoples.

Indigenous Perspectives

The view of Indigenous peoples as influenced by their knowledges, values, traditions and historical experiences.

Leadership

The Board of Trustees, Senior Administration and any person placed in a position of added responsibility within The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Persons or Communities

This terminology is used throughout the document to identify individuals or communities that are not heterosexual in orientation or that identify themselves based on their gender identities. It is intended to be inclusive.

Equity Policy Steering Committee

Minority Knowledges/Perspectives

The knowledges/perspectives of minority groups that have historically been silenced and marginalized.

Outcome

A result or visible effect.

Refer to: *The Oxford Canadian Dictionary*, 1998

Personal Needs

Physical, emotional, social, interpersonal, and spiritual needs.

Prejudice

A frame of mind which tends to pre-judge a person, or a group, in a negative light. This negative judgment is usually without adequate evidence. These negative attitudes are frequently not recognized as unsoundly based assumptions because of the frequency with which they are repeated. They become common sense notions which are widely accepted and are used to justify acts of discrimination.

Refer to: Strengthening Hamilton's Community Initiative, *Anti-Racism Framework, 2003*.

Race

Race is a social category used to classify humankind according to common ancestry or descent and reliant upon differentiation by general physical characteristics such as a colour or skin and eyes, hair type, stature and facial features. There is no scientific evidence for race. It is socially constructed.

Refer to: Strengthening Hamilton's Community Initiative, *Anti-Racism Framework, 2003*.

Racism

Racism represents a set of ideologies, beliefs and learnings that implies, justifies, and asserts the superiority of one social group over another on the basis of physical and cultural characteristics. It comprises **prejudice**, (including ethnocentrism and stereotypes) and **discrimination**. These components, which contribute to the totality of racism as an ideology and practice are used by the dominant groups to perpetuate, justify, and legitimize its power and thereby establish a **power relationship**. Once power is institutionalized, racism becomes **systemic**.

Refer to: Strengthening Hamilton's Community Initiative, *Anti-Racism Framework, 2003*.

Register

Each of several forms of a language (colloquial, formal, literary, etc.) usually used in particular circumstances.

Refer to: *The Canadian Oxford Dictionary, 1998*.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation is more than simply a "status" that an individual possesses; it is an immutable personal characteristic that forms part of an individual's core identity. Sexual Orientation encompasses the range of human sexuality from gay and lesbian to bisexual and heterosexual orientations.

Refer to: *Ontario Human Rights Commission Policy on Discrimination and Harassment because of Sexual Orientation*

Socio-economic Status

Socio-economic Status refers to the relative position of a family or individual on a hierarchical social structure based on their access to or control of wealth, prestige and power.

Refer to: J. Doug Wilms, *Vulnerable Children, 2002, pg. 337*.

Socio-economically Marginalized Communities

Socio-economically Marginalized Communities are communities whose members have incomes barely or insufficient to meet basic human needs.

Refer to: M. Adams, L. Bell, P. Griffin, *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook* New York, 1997.

Stakeholders

Persons employed by the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board and those individuals who have a vested interest.

Staff

Any person employed by the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board.

Working Poor

The working poor are a socio-economic group who live at or below the Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) established by Statistics Canada to designate a family or individual with a low-income as compared to other members of the community. For families, the LICO is set at the level at which a family spends 20% more of their pre-tax income on food, shelter and clothing than the average family in their community would spend on those necessities. The LICO is commonly known as the “poverty line”.

SOURCES

- M. Adams, L. Bell, P. Griffin, *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook* New York, 1997.
- Carl E. James, *Seeing Ourselves: Exploring Race, Ethnicity and Culture*, Toronto, Canada, 1995
- *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom – Equality Rights*
- Chairs of the Expert Panels on Students at Risk, *Building Pathways to Success: The Report of the Program Pathways for Students at Risk Work Group*, Toronto, 2003.
- *Employment Equity Act*
- Fran Endicott and Alok Mukherjee, *A Glossary of Terms* developed for a workshop on anti-discriminatory organizational change.
- Ministry of Education, *Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation, 1993 Ontario Human Rights Code*
- Strengthening Hamilton’s Community Initiative, *Anti-Racism Framework, 2003*.
- J. Doug Wilms, *Vulnerable Children*, 2002, pg. 337.

LEGISLATIVE PRINCIPLES

CANADIAN CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS – EQUALITY RIGHTS

15. (1) Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

15. (2) Subsection (1) does not preclude any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

ONTARIO HUMAN RIGHTS CODE

...recognition of the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world and is in accord with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as proclaimed by the United Nations; ...it is public policy in Ontario to recognize the dignity and worth of every person and to provide for equal rights and opportunities without discrimination that is contrary to law, and having as its aim the creation of a climate of understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of each person so that each person feels a part of the community and able to contribute fully to the development and well-being of the community and Province.

PART I: Freedom from Discrimination

- 1.** Every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to services, goods and facilities, without discrimination because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status or handicap.
- 5. (1)** Every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to employment without discrimination because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, record of offences, marital status, family status or handicap.
 - (2)** Every person who is an employee has a right to freedom from harassment in the workplace by the employer or agent of the employer or by another employee because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, age, record of offences, marital status, family status or handicap.
- 7. (2)** Every person who is an employee has a right to freedom from harassment in the workplace because of sex by his or her employer or agent of the employer or by another employee.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY ACT (Former Legislation)

An Act to provide for Employment Equity for Aboriginal People, People with Disabilities, Members of Racial Minorities and Women.

The people of Ontario have recognized in the Human Rights Code the inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family and have recognized those rights in respect of employment in such statutes as the Employment Standards Act and the Pay Equity Act. This Act extends principles of those Acts and has as its object the amelioration of conditions in employment for Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, members of racial minorities and women in all workplaces in Ontario and the provision of the opportunity for people in these groups to fulfil their potential in employment.

1. (1) All people are entitled to equal treatment in accordance with the Human Rights Code.
2. The following principles of employment equity apply throughout Ontario:
 1. Every Aboriginal person, every person with a disability, every member of a racial minority and every woman is entitled to be considered for employment, hired, retained, treated and promoted free from barriers, including systemic and deliberate practices and policies, that discriminate against them as an Aboriginal person, as a person with a disability, as a member of a racial minority or as a woman.
 2. Every employer's workforce, in all occupational categories and at all levels of employment, shall reflect the representation of Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, members of racial minorities and women in the community.
 3. Every employer shall ensure that its employment policies and practices, including policies and practices with respect to recruitment, hiring, retention, treatment, are free from barriers, both systemic and deliberate, that discriminate against Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, members of racial minorities and women.
 4. Every employer shall implement positive measures with respect to the recruitment, hiring, retention, treatment and promotion of Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, members of racial minorities and women.
 5. Every employer shall implement supportive measures with respect to the recruitment, hiring, retention, treatment and promotion of Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, members of racial minorities and women which also benefit the employer's workforce as a whole.