

EQUITY DEPARTMENT

HAMILTON-WENTWORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



Inclusive Language Guidelines

DRAFT VERSION



Together we're better!

Acknowledgments

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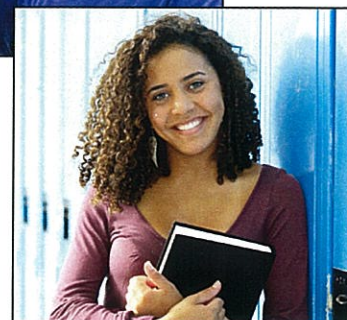


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Equity Policy

Equity Policy Statement

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*.

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 removing barriers where they exist and 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 nondiscriminatory, fair and equitable.
- 10.0 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide equity training and resources for trustees and all employee groups.



Introduction

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's *Equity Policy* responds to the diversity of the community by affirming the Board's commitment to the Principles of Equity and the equality rights enshrined in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code. Diversity means different ethnic, ethno-cultural, sexual orientation, gender identities and expressions, a broad range of socio-economic situations, physical, and emotional needs, lifestyle experiences, and changing family situations. The *Equity Policy* Guiding Principles express the Board's understanding of the Principles of Equity.

The goal of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's *Equity Policy* is to create accepting and respectful school and workplaces. These guidelines are designed to assist staff in understanding the power of language to create acceptance and respect within their workplace. The *Inclusive Language Guidelines* provides a communication procedure that recognizes respectful terminology for people from a variety of socio-cultural groups. The intent of this document is that it be used as a guide for respectful language in professional and business communications in order to recognize and avoid bias as well as discriminatory language. The *Inclusive Language Guidelines* affirms the Board's commitment to valuing the diversity of our students and staff by ensuring inclusive language is used in all written (including electronic) and spoken communication.

The Principles of Equity are based on an understanding and acknowledgement that not all members of the community are able to access the Board's services in the same manner, and therefore, supports are required to remove barriers to equal access to Board services. English as a Second Language and Special Educational programming both exemplify the principles of equity. These programs acknowledge that English Language Learners and students with special educational needs require enhanced support to access the Ontario Curriculum in the same manner as their peers.

These guidelines will provide examples of appropriate expressions and terms that can be used by staff while performing such functions as writing (letters, memoranda, notices, newsletters, reports, etc.) or speaking (meetings, workshops, announcements, presentations, etc.); when designing notices, posters, and similar visual display materials; and when fulfilling their teaching responsibilities, whether communicating with students or with parents and the community.

It is recognized that changes in language are not always easily made. Language is rich in alternatives that speakers and writers, sensitive to attitudes and beliefs of audiences, can use without diminishing the effectiveness of their communication or sacrificing notions of grammatical propriety. It is a powerful tool which can be used to change stereotypes and attitudes. Appropriate language choices can bring about a shift in emphasis but more importantly it can assist in the creation of healthy, respectful relationships. Language is critical in shaping and reflecting our thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and concepts.

Introduction

Cultural Proficiency Framework

The development of this document has been influenced by the Cultural Proficiency Framework developed by Randal Lindsay and his colleagues. Lindsay writes that “Cultural Proficiency is the policies and practices of an organization or the values and behaviours of an individual that enable that agency or person to interact effectively in a diverse environment.” (Robins, Lindsay, Lindsay and Terrell, 2007)

One of the purposes of this document is to assist Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board staff in communicating with our staff, students, parents and community members in an effective and respectful manner that reflects the five principles of cultural proficiency.

Guiding Principles of Cultural Proficiency

- 1 Culture is a predominant force in the lives of people and organizations
- 2 People are served in varying degrees by the dominant culture
- 3 People have both group identities and individual identities
- 4 Diversity within cultures is vast and significant
- 5 Each cultural group has unique cultural needs

Stereotypes

Stereotypes can lead to discrimination as they take away a person’s individuality and oversimplify qualities that often lack accuracy. Language is critical in shaping and reflecting our thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and concepts. Some words by their very nature degrade and diminish people. The language customarily used to denote people from different groups has been condemnatory, judgmental, or couched in medical jargon. All such inappropriate images continue to arouse feelings of embarrassment, shame, guilt, and discomfort. The power of words and images to reflect and shape community perceptions of people from diverse groups is widely acknowledged.

This molding of perceptions and attitudes through language is an ongoing and dynamic process. It represents an important responsibility and a significant challenge to all involved – particularly those who engage in public communications as a part of their professional lives. Language can contribute significantly to the creation and maintenance of stereotyping. Stereotyping assumes all people from a certain group bear the same specific quality or behaviour. To avoid this in language usage, it should not be implied that people from certain groups all have the same qualities. They should be portrayed as individuals with a variety of qualities, rather than the characteristic being the main focus of the description. For example, use the term “a person who is HIV positive” and not “AIDS sufferer” or “a victim of AIDS”.



Guidelines on Inclusive Communication

Gratuitous Specification of a Person's Characteristics

It is unacceptable to draw attention to a person's socio-cultural characteristics if it has no relevance in context. Words can sometimes be condescending or trivializing when unnecessary reference to a characteristic of a person highlights the irrelevant and perpetuates the concept that the person is firstly an individual with a particular characteristic and secondly, an individual of talent and skill.

For example, to describe a person who performs a specific job and uses a wheelchair is gratuitous specification; only the person performing the specific job should be used.

Tone of Voice and Non-Verbal Inclusive Language

Regardless of the words used, non-verbal communication and tone of voice express emotions, opinions, and attitudes. It is important to ensure that a professional tone, respect and acceptance, particularly when working within a diverse workplace, is used. It is important to avoid patronizing, condescending, sarcastic, and other inflections that might be misunderstood as being disrespectful.

Non-verbal communication is also cultural in nature. Some people do not prefer to shake hands, particularly with people of the opposite gender, as a way of showing respect. Some people will not look someone older directly in the eye as a form of respect. In some cultures, the western hand motion for "come here" does not mean "come here" but something quite derogatory. Since we all cannot become experts on each cultural variation, good practice suggests we use the "mirror" technique. When you meet someone, try to mirror their greetings and their non-verbal communication.

For example, some Korean students will always present a piece of paper with two hands. If you give it back with one hand, it is not as polite. If you return it with two hands, you are mirroring what is considered polite for that person.

As people integrate into Canadian society, mannerisms and non-verbal communication may or may not change and adapt. It is important that we do not assume that anyone from a particular cultural group will behave in any fixed way. One of the key tenets of cultural proficiency is not to expect all members of diverse cultures to change their behaviours to those of the dominant culture, but instead to accept and embrace difference.

Guidelines on Inclusive Communication

Speeches

To address men and women in the audience equally, speakers should ensure their remarks do not demean, exclude, or stereotype members of either sex. Inclusive language should be used throughout the speech. Content should be balanced by references, examples, and anecdotes that include both males and females. Stories or jokes that may be perceived as sexist, racist, heterosexist or homophobic should be avoided. Opening forms of address that include members of both sexes should be used, e.g. Good Afternoon, Everyone, Colleagues, Friends, Associates, etc. Staff has a responsibility to ensure guests who are invited to speak at our schools are aware of the need to use inclusive language.

Some general guidelines for guest speakers include the following:

- Include both sexes in the opening address or identify neither and use “staff”, “students”, “parents” etc.
- Ensure non-sexist, non-homophobic, and non-racist language is used throughout the speech
- Balance content – references and examples should include sexes, different races, faiths, cultures, sexual orientation, and gender identities/expressions
- Avoid sexist, racist, homophobic/transphobic, and/or religious stories, jokes, etc.
- Avoid statements or labels that convey prejudice
- Avoid the use of stereotypical voices and body language
- Only mention racial, ethnic origin, religious affiliation, disability, gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity, etc., if relevant

Visual Communications

Women, Aboriginal people, visible minorities, same gender-led families and people with different abilities should appear frequently and prominently in all pictorial material. Men and women of all backgrounds should be shown as successful in all fields, including non-traditional occupations, at all levels of authority, participating in all aspects of life including business, home, etc. and finally, as capable, efficient, confident persons.

Don't Be Nervous, Relax

It is normal to feel a bit intimidated by the need to change to inclusive language. We learn our biases from a young age and our patterns of speech and mannerisms become habits that are sometimes difficult to change as adults. There is a good chance that in a diverse society, at some point, we will offend someone unintentionally. We should not become paralyzed or withdraw from communicating with others who are different simply by our desire to use respectful language. So relax and remember that when we do offend someone as a result of our use of language, it is important to apologize and show that you respect his or her preferred use of language, tone, or non-verbal communication in the future.



Cultural Interpretation

Cultural Interpreters

A cultural interpreter faithfully transmits messages between individuals who do not speak the same language. The interpreter is the transmitter, not the source of the message being communicated. In any interpreting situation, the interpreter is working on behalf of both parties equally.

During a session, interpreters will:

- Explain to both parties how they will proceed
- Explain what their role is
- Relate what they can be expected to do and not do
- Inform both parties that they will be interpreting everything that will be said, without adding to or deleting from the message
- Inform both parties that confidentiality is always maintained regarding everything the interpreter hears or sees

The act of interpreting is complex and mentally demanding. In order to provide good service and ensure accuracy, a cultural interpreter may have to interrupt speakers engaged in lengthy communications; ask for a pause every now and then; or take notes in order to remember certain details.

The use of older students or family members to interpret during important meetings regarding student achievement, conduct, attendance, etc. is inappropriate. Cultural interpreters are trained by their organization to maintain confidentiality and simply translate the spoken word accurately. Asking students to participate in confidential discussions places both the family and the student in an awkward situation.

Expectations of Interpreters

During a conference with a student, family or community member, it is expected that cultural interpreters will:

- Provide introductions of teacher and non-English speaking client
- Translate everything that is said
- Maintain confidentiality
- Deliver the messages as faithfully as possible
- Maintain impartiality
- Interrupt for clarification
- Not impose their own values or opinions into discussion

Cultural Interpretation

The following are strategies to assist the teacher in working effectively with an Interpreter.

DO'S

- Schedule adequate time for the interpretation.
- Clarify the objectives of the meeting, topics to be covered and any technical terminology, which may be used.
- Provide the interpreter with any general information you may have on the non-English speaking client (e.g., place of birth, length of time in Canada).
- Allow the interpreter to introduce him/herself and explain his/her role and responsibilities.
- Ask the interpreter NOT to screen the client's comments or messages for fear of offending you or because it may reflect poorly on the client or their ethno/racial community.
- Ask the interpreter to interpret as accurately as possible everything the client says, including slang, obscenities or idioms.
- Instruct the interpreter to ask for clarification immediately if they do not understand either you or the non-English speaking person.
- Look at and speak to the non-English speaking person directly, not the interpreter.
- Speak in the first person.
- Use simple language and avoid using jargon or technical terms.
- Speak clearly and slowly.
- Regulate the pace of the meeting by giving a small amount of information at a time.

DON'TS

- Interrupt or cut down your explanations to save time.
- Leave the interpreter alone to give explanations to the non-English speaking person.
- Hold a private conversation with the interpreter in the non-English speaking person's presence.
- Ask the interpreter for their opinion or cultural explanation.
- Ask the interpreter to perform any duty that is not their role or responsibility.
- Book future appointments with the interpreter prior to contacting the ESL/NSL/Equity consultant for authorization.

Please refer to *The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board ESL & ELD Manual* Revised July, 2005 Section 13, page 8 for more information.

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board ESL & ELD Manual also contains six school letters translated into 26 different languages. These letters deal with issues such as attendance, the scheduling of parent-teacher interviews, requests for a meeting with school staff and a cover letter asking families to take the attached document to someone who can translate the document.



Translated Documents

Translating Documents

Translating key documents into the main languages of the school community signals to all members of the school community that they are welcome and included in the school community. It provides non-English speaking community members access to important information regarding the school.

Translating documents, however, can be costly and time consuming process. It is recommended that schools and departments translate key documents that contain important messages regarding the education system and its processes.

Guidelines for Translating Documents

The following guidelines will assist in the preparation and procurement of translated documents:

- Identify possible documents for translation prior to the beginning of the academic year
- Identify key and enduring messages
- Develop drafts of the documents using plain, jargon-free language
- Seek a quote from a translation service (such as Settlement and Integration Services Organization)
- Prioritize translations based on budget available

It is highly recommended to use a translation service to undertake document translation. These services have accountability processes which ensure the accuracy of the translation. It is not advisable to use students or community members to translate school documents with educational or legal implications. Instead, students or community members can assist in the translation of school signage, school work (i.e., dual language projects) or a blurb in a school newsletter.

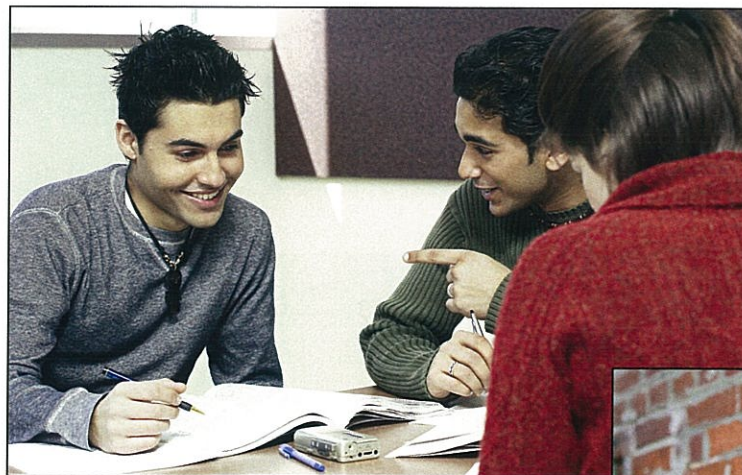


EthnoCultural Communication

Racial, Ethnocultural, Language and Faith groups will have diverse ways of naming and referring to themselves. It is important to respect a group's or an individual's preference about how they wish to be addressed. For example, some people in African Canadian communities prefer the term Black, while others prefer African Canadian. Similarly, an individual may want to be identified geographically according to their country of origin (i.e., Pakistani, Afghan, Korean, Indian, and Chinese) or region (i.e., Asian, South Asian, African, and South-American). Others may prefer a linguistic (Arab-speaker, Punjabi-speaker, etc.) or cultural identification such as (Christian, Muslim, a member of the Jewish Community). It is important to engage with community members to determine how they prefer to identify themselves. Often, individuals will self-identify, but it may be necessary to simply ask how a person or community prefers to be identified.

Racial jokes, putdowns and slurs are never acceptable. If the listening person perceives the term to be a put down, then it is the listener's preference that takes precedence, not the speaker's.

However, it is vital to remember that individuals have group and personal identities. From the outside, a cultural group may appear to be a monolith, but there is always great diversity within a cultural group. Be cognizant that that country of origin or faith is simply one identity. It is better to refer to that person as "a person who is Muslim" rather than "a Muslim" or "The Jewish Community" rather than "the Jews". Further, the phrase "those people" should be avoided as it indicates an "us versus them" attitude that further divides people. Generalizations about any community are inappropriate, particularly if they contribute to a negative stereotype about that community.



Classism-free Communication

The principles of anti-classist communication are similar to antiracist communication. A person's socio-economic status is simply one component of their identity. Classism-free communication seeks to avoid language that reinforces prejudices or stereotypes based on socio-economic status. Describing something one considers sub-standard as “a poor man's...” or “ghetto” reinforces classist beliefs.

Jokes, putdowns and slurs based on socio-economic status are as harmful as racist behaviours. Using terms such as “trailer park trash” or “hill billy” to describe a student or family is as offensive as using a racist term.

An important consideration in classism-free communication is using language that is accessible to all members of the school community, regardless of socio-economic status or literacy level. A formal tone, or register, is used in schools and educational activities but often the terminology and jargon used by educators is not accessible to all members of the community. Often this register pre-supposes a deep understanding of the education system and a high level of literacy. Using simple language conveys key messages and information in all media, removes communication barriers and helps to ensure that all members of the school community have access to important information.

Classism-free communication does not mean “dumbing down” the information provided but being mindful of an audience's lack of experience with the subject matter and the need to communicate clearly. Avoiding the use of acronyms as much as possible because they pre-suppose a knowledge of the actual term (IEP for example) is a useful classism-free strategy; as is using shorter, clearer sentences that avoid complex constructions such as the passive voice.

Our community is comprised of a variety of family structures. When communicating with families, please be mindful that not all students live in a two parent family. Using “parent/guardian/caregiver” as a salutation acknowledges this reality. Asking students “who takes care of you” or “who do you live with?” will assist in communicating with the student's caregivers.



Gender Neutral Language

The use of gender specific language can signal that status, power and jobs are only held by one gender and effectively limits the potential of the members of the other gender. Using gender neutral language assists in creating an environment in which all persons feel included and equal regardless of their gender.

Job and Position Titles

Forms of address and occupational descriptions should identify the positions or the role held by an individual rather than the gender of the person. Suffixes such as “ess” and “ette” are no longer considered acceptable because they are diminutive in nature. Also, words that characterize “masculine” and “feminine” characteristics are not always appropriate. Some guidelines to influence stylistic choices are that people must be treated equally, no irrelevance should be introduced, no person should be excluded, and there should be stylistic consistency.

The following is a list of preferred terms and those to avoid as examples.

Preferred Terms	Terms to Avoid
Chair or Chairperson	Chairman, Chairwoman
Supervisor	Foreman
Utility Worker	Utility man
Tradesperson	Tradesman
Nurse	Male Nurse
Firefighter	Fireman
Police Officer	Policeman, Policewoman
Postal Carrier	Mailman

Parallel Constructions and References

When women and men are grouped together in language, parallel constructions that recognize men and women equally should be used.

Preferred Terms	Terms to Avoid
Spouses	Man and Wife
Men and Women	Ladies and Men
The women at work	The girls at work
The men at work	The men at the office



Gender Neutral Language

Use of the Word “Man”

The use of the word “man” to describe all individuals and humanity itself is a traditional convention of the English language. However, it is a convention that signals the pre-eminence of one gender over another and reinforces sexism. The following chart outlines a few examples of older usage and their new, equal, replacements.

Preferred Terms	Terms to Avoid
Human beings, Humanity, Humankind, People	Man, Mankind
Artificial, Manufactured, Synthetic	Man-made
Staff hours, Work hours	Man hours
Workforce	Manpower
The average person	The common man
Staffing the desk	Manning the desk
Best person for the job	Best man for the job
Team player	Sportsmanship

Pronouns

Replace the pronoun “his” with “his or her”. Alternative approaches can be used to avoid the exclusive use of the masculine pronoun, such as recasting the pronoun from “his” into the plural “their”. Another strategy is to change “his” to “the”, e.g. “the principal will complete the report” rather than “the principal will complete his or her report”.

Pairs of nouns and pronouns tend to become set in conversational order, including:

- husband and wife
- young and old
- boys and girls
- black and white
- her and his

In some contexts, if the order appears to give precedence to a group, the order can be varied.

Gender Equity in Internal and External Correspondence

A designation of gender or marital status is not necessary in addressing or referring to individuals in internal or external letters, memoranda, or reports. The use of “Ms” is acceptable when the use of a title is deemed necessary for public relations and the female’s preference is not known. For internal correspondence, use either two initials or the first initial with the surname. Position titles should be used where appropriate.

When replying to external correspondence, use the form designated by the originator, unless unacceptable by these guidelines. If the information is not available do not assume a particular sex or status. When initiating correspondence, if the sex and name of the addressee are unknown, use the form “Dear Madam/Sir” or “Dear (position) as in “Dear Superintendent” (eliminates gender identification).



Sexual Orientation

Homophobic and heterosexist language contributes to an unwelcome environment for members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community.¹ Once again, homophobic jokes, slurs and comments are highly offensive and must be avoided. Same sex parents within our community will most likely refer to themselves as parents and will use the term “partner” to denote their significant other.

The use of “gay” as a pejorative (i.e. don’t be “gay” or “That’s so gay”) should be avoided and students should be told not to use them. Even if the expression is being used to mean something different, e.g. “That’s so stupid”, the connection is still there: gay = stupid. For a student who is gay, the connection is not lost, giving the person the message that “I’m gay, gay means stupid, therefore I’m stupid and others won’t like me if I come out to them as gay”. These expressions further demean and ostracize members of these groups, even if that is not the intent.

Ability

Disabilities are often used as a label to describe a person. This practice then hides the individual within their disability. Therefore, the language usage has evolved to place the person not the disability at the forefront. For example, to describe someone as handicapped or disabled is no longer appropriate. Instead, they are a person with a disability.

Labels regarding a person’s ability set limitations and lower expectations. In the school setting, a change in language usage is often the first step in altering the perceptions of a student’s potential. Calling a student “low” or “weak” speaks to globally lowered expectations of the student rather than an informed assessment of the student’s strengths and weaknesses. These terms should be avoided when describing students.

Recommended Language

Preferred Terms	Terms to Avoid
Person with a disability	Handicapped, Disabled
Vision Impaired	Blind
Developmentally Delayed	Retarded
Hearing Impaired	Deaf
Student on an IEP	IEP Student/IEP Kid
A person with depression, schizophrenia, etc.	Depressive, schizophrenic



¹ Please note that this term was accepted by the Board to describe “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 Glossary*)

Glossary

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.

Barriers

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

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

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 Ethno cultural Equity in School Boards: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation, 1993.

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.

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.

First Languages

A person's native language or mother tongue. Refer to: The Oxford Canadian Dictionary, 1998



Glossary

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.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Persons or Communities

Individuals or communities that are not heterosexual in orientation or that identify themselves based on their gender identities. It is intended to be inclusive.

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.

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.

Stakeholders

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



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