Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan

2017

Ontario

Contents

Moving Forward: Fulfilling Our Renewed Vision for Education

Ensuring equity is a central goal of Ontario's publicly funded education system, as set out in

In addition to the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, the Ministry of Education continues to implement the actions outlined in *Journey Together: OntarioÕs Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples* (2016). In particular, the ministryÕs Indigenous Education Strategy supports learning and achievement for Indigenous students and promotes awareness about First Nation, MŽtis and Inuit cultures, histories, perspectives and contributions in schools. It is an essential component of OntarioÕs work with Indigenous peoples, which focuses on improving student achievement and well-being among First Nation, MŽtis and Inuit students.

We are also working with other ministries and government agencies to develop a process for collaboratively producing programs that will be&er support Black youth in the future, such as those outlined in *OntarioÕs 3-Year Anti-Racism Strategic Plan*, the *Ontario Black Youth Action Plan* and *OntarioÕs Poverty Reduction Strategy*. Other programs and partnerships include collaboration with the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to improve access to postsecondary education by helping to eliminate !nancial and non-!
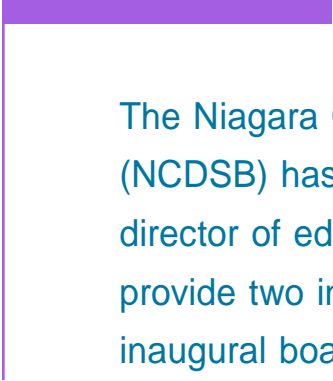
The Niagara Catholic District School Board (NCDSB) has a best practice whereby the director of education and board legal counsel provide two information sessions prior to an inaugural board Ð one for prospective trustees, and one for new trustees Ð that outline good governance and responsibilities, !nance, equity, student achievement and well-being.

Ð John Crocco, Director of Education, NCDSB

Equity is a strategic priority of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB). Our school district is committed to reducing barriers to learning to improve equity of access and opportunity for all students. We believe that we can achieve this by identifying students and groups of students who face barriers to learning; di"erentiating resources and supports for students; ensuring e"ective use of funding; and improving graduation rates for all students including Indigenous students, students living in poverty, English language leaae

Objectives and Actions

OntarioÕs Education Equity Action Plan is designed to realize the goal of ensuring equity, as part of OntarioÕs renewed vision for education:

> ÒOntario schools need to be places where everyone can succeed in a culture of high expectations. !ey need to be places where educators and students value diversity, respect each other, and see themselves re"ected in their learning. It is particularly im portant to provide the best possible learning opportunities and supports for students who may be at risk of not succeeding. . . .

> Ò. . . !e fundamental principle driving this work is that every student has the opportunity to succeed, regardless of ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic status or other factors.Ó

> (Achieving Excellence, 2014, p. 8)

"e plan outlines the actions, policies and professional learning that will help us realize the visionÊof Achieving ExcellenceÊ. It will meet its objectives

across the education system. "e Secretariat will work with all education partners in a spirit of collaborative professionalism to advance this work across OntarioÕs publicly funded education system.

Our progress so far in promoting equity and inclusion in education tells us that when we focus on a small number of clear objectives and track our impact, we have be&er success in achieving them. OntarioÕs Education Equity Action Plan sets out the action items that will enable-us, in con sultation and collaboration with our education partners, students, parents and Ontario communities, to combat persistent systemic inequities and improve student well-being and achievement. "

The development of the Equity and Diversity
Strategic Plan with measurable outcomes, is a
demonstration of our commitment to evolve and
to ensure that equitable and inclusive practices,
policies and initiatives are implemented at all levels
in the Durham District School Board (DDSB).

This is important work as we ensure accountability
as system leaders. We set clear direction, ensure the

Overview:
Ontario's Education
Equity Action Plan

This section provides a general overview of the key initiatives of Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan in four areas:

- ¥ School and Classroom Practices
- ¥ Leadership, Governance and Human Resource Practices
- ¥ Data Collection, Integration and Reporting
- ¥ Organizational Culture Change

▶ School and Classroom Practices

A key aspect of removing systemic barriers is to ensure that school and classroom practices re%ect and respond to the diversity of students and sta#.

Existing structures, policies, programs and practices may unintentionally disadvantage certain student populations, including racialized students, students experiencing poverty, Indigenous students,

newcomers to Canada, students who identify as LGBTQ or Two-Spirited, children and youth in care, religious minorities, French language minori ties, students with disabilities, and students with special education needs. Our goal is to identify existing systemic barriers and remove them, and to guard against such barriers as we develop new policies and programs.

While we have achieved much for students, we continue to observe poorer outcomes for disproportionate numbers of students from low-income environments, racialized students, Indigenous students, students who identify as LGBTQ or Two-Spirited, children and youth in care, students with disabilities, and students with special education needs. "e ministry will work with education partners, students, parents and communities to examine and address any systemic barriers built into our system so that more students can achieve and pursue their chosen pathways to work, college, apprenticeship or university.

For example, applied and academic courses in secondary schools were

Unintended Equity Outcomes: Percentage of Enrolment Records in Academic and Applied Grade 9 Mathematics Course

Schools in higher-income
communities

■ Academic
■ Applied

Please note: High-income and low-income schools are grouped based on the estimated LIM 50 (low-income measure aligned with Poverty Reduction Strategy)

and has recommended that education systems Òavoid early tracking and defer student course selections until upper sećondary.Ó

Students must also experience teaching and learning that is re%ective of their needs and of who they are. In order to ensure that all students feel safe, accepted and inspired to succeed, schools and classrooms must be responsive to culture, broadly de!ned. ÒCulturally responsive pedagogyÓ recognizes that all students learn in ways that are connected to background, language, family structure and social or cultural identity. It goes beyond recognizing uniqueness to intentionally nurturing it in order to create and facilitate e#ective conditions for learning. School and classroom practices must be re%ective of and responsive to the diversity of students and sta#.

We also know that we need to take a critical look at student discipline, because racialized students, Indigenous students, students with disabilities, and students with special education needs are overrepresented in the

▶ Leadership, Governance and Human Resource Practices

Leadership plays a critical role in shaping the environment for both student and sta# in the education system. "e diversity of the students in Ontario schools should be re%ected in the diversity of their education workers, teachers, and school and system leaders. Strengthening diversity in leadership and in the classroom helps not only to promote a sense of belonging among students, but also helps to bolster innovation and creativity in the school environment.

To create safe, inclusive and engaging learning and work environments, education leaders must be commi&ed to equity and inclusion for all students and to upholding and promoting human rights. A necessary and foundational step to creating such learning and work environments is to ensure accountability at all levels of school boards for equity, inclusion and human rights. To support the implementation of this step, the action

disaggregated identity-based data. In addition to Indigenous self-identi!cation, some student identity data is already collected province-wide, such as exceptionalities, immigration status and language !rst spoken. How this data is used and mobilized to close equity gaps varies across the province. In addition, only one school board in Ontario collects broader identity data, such as race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and parental socio-economic status.

A consistent approach to collecting and analyzing voluntarily provided identity-based data will help local school boards identify where systemic barriers exist, and will help determine how to eliminate discriminatory biases in order to support equity and student achievement and well-being through training and targeted programs and supports. "is work will support the mandate of Ontario's Anti-Racism Directorate and will align with data standards developed by the Directorate.

"e immediate steps in the action plan include:

- ¥ working with school boards to develop a consistent approach to the collection of voluntarily provided identity-based student data;
- ¥ working with Indigenous partners to co-develop indicators of Indigenous student success and well-being;
- ¥ providing support to school boards on sharing knowledge and best practices when applying student-identity data; and
- ¥ supporting school boards and labour partners in undertaking workforce data collection and analysis to ensure representative, equitable and healthy work and learning environments.

▶ Organizational Culture Change

"e Ministry of Education must lead by example. By applying an equity lens to internal ministry structures, policies, programs and practices, we will work to ensure an authentic and vibrant organizational culture. "is shi' in culture will be a model of diversity, equity, inclusion, and commitment to upholding and promoting human rights.

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inclusion. An equitable and inclusive education system is a necessary condition to enable all Ontario students to feel included, respected and able to succeed. Together with our education partners, we are invested in working towards that goal in the spirit and culture of collaborative profes sionalism, including consultations and co-development with our Indigenous partners.

Applying an equity, inclusion and human rights perspective to internal organizational structures, policies, programs and practices will help to

▶ School and Classroom Practices

Action Items

1. Strengthening inclusive and culturally responsive and relevant teaching, curriculum, assessment and resources
   - ¥ Enhance the Ontario curriculum review process to ensure diverse perspectives and experiences are re%ected in the curriculum.
   - ¥ Implement revisions to the Ontario curriculum to include mandatory learning about the history of residential schools, treaties and the legacy of colonialism.
   - ¥ Further support boards in implementing teaching practices, curriculum and assessment that are culturally re%ective of and responsive to the students they teach, so that all students see themselves, and their own and their classmatesÕ lived experience, re%ected in what and how they are learning.
   - ¥ Provide resources and professional development supports to teachers and school leaders to combat Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, racism, homophobia and transphobia.
   - ¥ Support boards in assessing learning resources (both traditional and electronic), including resources in library collections, to ensure that they are accessible and that they re%ect diversity.

2. Supporting student pathway choices
   - ¥ Work with education partners, students, parents and communities

3. Addressing suspension, expulsion, and exclusion rates

   ¥ Facilitate boards' efforts in gathering data on suspensions, expulsions and exclusions and on the groups affected.

   ¥ Assist boards in identifying ways to address disparities that may be revealed by the data.

4. Increasing parent engagement in equity and inclusive education

   ¥ Enhance the focus on equity and inclusive education, making it a theme for the 2018–19 Parent Reaching Out grants.

   ¥ Identify more intentional strategies for reaching out and ensuring representation of diverse communities on PICs and school councils.

   ¥ Work with school boards and Indigenous partners to strengthen Indigenous Education Advisory Committees.

   ¥ Identify strategies for reaching out to parents who are disengaged from the education system for a variety of reasons.

Outcomes/Performance Measures

1. Strengthening inclusive and culturally responsive and relevant teaching, curriculum, assessment and resources

   Years 1 and 2 (2017–18 to 2018–19)

   ¥ School boards and EQAO demonstrate commitment to inclusive/universal design and culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy through their strategic plans, and demonstrate how inclusive design has been implemented in schools and classrooms. Examples of these are reflected in school and system leaders' performance appraisals as evidence of meeting equity goals.

   ¥ Students, parents and community members are engaged in the process of assessing school library holdings and advising on guiding principles for augmenting collections.

Year 3 and beyond (2019Ð20+)

¥ Inclusive/universal design and culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy are fundamental to school and classroom planning.

¥ Schools and classrooms are more inclusive, safe and welcoming for all students.

¥ Students have access to rich and diverse library resources.

2. Supporting student pathway choices

Years 1 and 2 (2017Ð18 to 2018Ð19)

¥ Consider the outcomes of the current approach to academic and applied course selection and pursue opportunities, in collaboration with partners, to ensure that all students are supported in achieving their maximum potential and choosing appropriate pathways to work, college, apprenticeship, or university.

Year 3 and beyond (2019Ð20+)

¥ Monitor and report on the outcomes of the renewed approach, such as graduation and post-secondary education transition rates, using identity-based data.

3. Addressing suspension, expulsion and exclusion rates

Years 1 and 2 (2017Ð18 to 2018Ð19)

¥ Positive preventive measures are used more o'en to address student behaviour.

¥ Data re%ects fewer incidents of human rights violations.

¥ Boards analyse suspension, expulsion and exclusion data in the context of student identity data to identify and address systemic disparities.

¥ A province-wide conference is organized to showcase e#ective practices in addressing student behavioural concerns.

Year 3 and beyond (2019Ð20+)

¥ Students report feeling safe and accepted in school climate surveys.

¥ Schools report fewer suspensions, expulsions and exclusions.

¥ Educators and relevant sta# receive training on established positive preventive measures for addressing student behaviour.

¥ Local board and school strategies re%ecting best practices are deployed to reduce/eliminate overrepresentations in student discipline data.

4. Increasing parent engagement in equity and inclusive education

Years 1 and 2 (2017Ð18 to 2018Ð19)

¥ School leaders, educators and sta# actively and intentionally encourage the engagement of parents who have not previously been active in the school community.

¥ Parents/guardians and other community members are valued as important resources in creating and maintaining inclusive and equitable school communities.

Year 3 and beyond (2019Ð20+)

¥ Sustained and intentional engagement of parents from diverse populations, and of diverse communities, in the board is supported through Parents Reaching Out grants.

▶ Leadership, Governance and Human Resource Practices

Action Items

1. Accountability for equity and human rights
   ¥ Enhance accountability for equity and human rights in principal,

support representative promotion of teachers to principal-quali!cation programs.

¥ Incorporate human rights and equity content into the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP).

¥ Support the recruitment and retention of Indigenous teacher education candidates, with a particular focus on northern communities and Indigenous languages.

¥ Identify opportunities to be&er prepare candidates in teacher education programs to work with students with disabilities and students with special education needs.

¥ Work with school boards to establish a focus on diversity in teacher and Early Childhood Educator (ECE) recruitment and hiring processes.

3. Enhanced diversity in hiring and promotion Ð School and system leade

¥ Establish and strengthen leadership development programs for teachers and principals such as fellowship and mentorship programs, with the objective of enhancing diversity in the pool of candidates for supervisory o$cers and principals.

¥ Work with providers of the principal quali!cat

¥

¥ "ere is evidence of increased a&ention to the principles of equity, inclusion and human rights throughout the education system.

2. Enhanced diversity in hiring and promotion Ð Educators

Years 1 and 2 (2017Ð18 to 2018Ð19)

¥ A concerted e#ort is made to recruit, hire and retain a diverse, quali!ed teaching profession.

¥ "ere is an enhanced focus on the recruitment of First Nation, Metis and Inuit candidates to the teaching profession.

Year 3 and beyond (2019Ð20+)

¥ "ere is increased diversity at faculties of education and among teacher candidates, registered Ontario College of Teachers (OCT), educators, and Early Childhood Educators (ECEs).

¥ Principals are engaged in a process to create diverse pools of teacher candidates.

3. Enhanced diversity in hiring and promotion Ð School and system leaders

Years 1 and 2 (2017Ð18 to 2018Ð19)

¥ Leadership development programs for teachers and principals are established.

¥ Content of executive programs re%ects diverse perspectives and pays explicit a&ention to upholding and promoting human rights.

4. Professional development focused on equity, inclusion and human rights

   Years 1 and 2 (2017Ð18 to 2018Ð19)

   ¥ Professional development opportunities and resources are expanded.

   ¥ School board trustees have a greater understanding of equity and their role as governors of the board.

   Year 3 and beyond (2019Ð20+)

   ¥ Schools and school boards are places where diverse voices, talents and skills are recognized, resulting in a broader and more diverse spectrum of ideas, knowledge and perspectives.

   ¥ School board trustees have a comprehensive understanding of the importance of holding directors of education account able for equity, inclusion and human rights compliance, of the mechanisms to do so and e#ective strategies to respond to and eliminate systemic barriers and individual discriminatory biases.

5. School board structures to promote and enforce human rights and equity

   Years 1 and 2 (2017Ð18 to 2018Ð19)

   ¥ Stakeholders are engaged in reviewing and strengthening school board structures and identi!ed policies, programs, and practices that promote and enforce equity and human rights across the public education system.

   Year 3 and beyond (2019Ð20+)

   ¥ Progress is made towards building a culture of respect for human rights, evidenced in part by a signi!cant reduction in the number of human rights ma&ers that are resolved at the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario.

▶ Data Collection, Integration and Reporting

Action Items

1. Developing a consistent approach to the collection and application of voluntarily provided student identity data

   ¥ Develop statement of principles and objectives for the collection of identity-based student data and support boards in undertaking student identity data collection and analysis that will inform policies and practices.

   ¥ Collect, analyze and report the following disaggregated data:
   (race
   (ethnicity
   (religion
   (disability
   (sexual orientation
   (gender identity
   (

Outcomes/Performance Measures

1. Developing a consistent approach to the collection and application of voluntarily provided student identity data

   Years 1 and 2 (2017Ð18 to 2018Ð19)

   ¥ A statement of principles to guide the collection of identity-based student data and a collaboratively developed action plan are in place.

   ¥ School boards engage in dialogue with parents, students, sta# and community partners to promote the view that sup porting equity requires evidence-informed decision making and be&er understandings of local communities.

   ¥ Indicators of Indigenous student success and well-being are co-developed with partners.

   ¥ Province-wide collection of voluntarily provided data on key identity-based data points for students is launched.

   Year 3 and beyond (2019-20+)

   ¥ Multi-year strategic plans, Board Improvement Plans for Student Achievement and School Improvement Plans for Student Achievement re%ect and are informed by student identity-based data and achievement data.

   ¥ "ere is evidence of closing gaps in achievement and well-being.

   ¥

Year 3 and beyond (2019-20+)
¥

the con!dence and skills to counter systemic barriers and discriminatory practices.

¥ E#ective practices for identifying and removing systemic barriers and biases in our daily work have been identi!ed.

¥ Human Resources has implemented a continuous cycle of assessment to detect discriminatory biases in ministry policies and practices.

¥ "e ministry demonstrates by example that a fair and equitable workplace must be at the core of workplace culture.

¥ Advisory groups and commi&ees are inclusive and dive-57 ((b) -4 (i)

Conclusion

The desire for equity is an aspiration that drives our collective

ontario.ca/educationequity

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