



**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
REPORT 23-008**

07 February 2023

FIELD TRIPS TIER 2 POLICY REVISIONS

Key Contact: Brett Reynolds, Associate Director, Ext: 8252

PURPOSE:

1. To seek input on draft revisions to [Policy P.029.SCO Field Trips, Excursions, Educational Tours, and Student Exchanges](#).

STRATEGIC LINKS:

2. The proposed policy revisions uphold the policy's commitment to collaborative, modernized, and high learning opportunities for all students in all programs through the organization of field trips while simultaneously ensuring the removal of barriers impacting equity of access, opportunity, and outcomes for students who wish to attend field trips in support of both the Culture of Innovation pillar and Culture of Social Responsibility pillar of the 2019-2023 OCDSB Strategic Plan.

CONTEXT:

3. Field trips, excursions and exchanges are an important aspect of students' education experience, providing positive learning experiences for students across grade levels and schools in the District. Policy P.029.SCO affirms the District's commitment to providing these valuable opportunities, and the associated policy considerations. From a policy perspective, field trips should support student achievement and wellbeing, mitigate risks to participants' health and safety and align with the district's strategic priorities of ensuring field trips are accessible to all students.

Recently, staff have undertaken a review of the policy and relevant procedures, with a view to modernizing them and ensuring they are aligned with the District's current processes and priorities. As part of the review of the policy, equity gaps were identified which need to be addressed, in addition to other changes to ensure the policy is better aligned with current practice.

4. On 10 May 2022, staff presented a tiered model approach to policy review as follows:

- Tier one changes would represent the most basic type of revision to a policy document in an effort to align with legislative change, update in a definition, corrections to language or formal or other straight-forward edits. These changes would not require additional internal, external or community feedback as there is no substantive change to the policy.
- Tier two policy revisions would represent changes to a policy that go beyond housekeeping and may provide new direction or a substantial change to the directive. Tier two changes would require a more robust internal review process and include some level of consultation (internal and/or external).
- Tier three policy revisions represent major overhauls to a policy that always require a significant level of consultation.

The proposed revisions to Policy P.029.SCO fall within a Tier 2 Policy Review. The revisions have been reviewed internally and some limited external and public consultation is still underway. The revised policy will be brought back to the Board, through Committee of the Whole, for approval in March.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

5. Summary of Key Changes

As indicated above, the policy has been reviewed and revised to bring it into alignment with the new policy template and conventions, as well as to ensure the policy is aligned with the District's current priorities, particularly as they relate to equity and accessibility. In that regard, the policy has been revised to include an explicit statement regarding the duty to accommodate all students and eliminating barriers, for example, related to socioeconomic status (financial barriers), disability (transportation, physical sites) or gender (accommodations during overnight trips). The responsibility for ensuring appropriate safeguards and processes are in place is delegated to the Director of Education through the accompanying procedures.

The proposed draft (Appendix A) incorporates the following revisions:

- Title change in order to simplify language and streamline the terms used by staff. The new revision suggests an encompassing Field Trips term that would include any excursion supervised by staff, including reciprocal student exchanges. The term excludes competitive athletics that would be addressed in a separate policy.
- Inclusion of Board commitment statement to Indigenous rights, human rights, and equity.
- A new Rationale section that clarifies the legislative authority of the Board to run field trips.
- Moving procedural content, such as parental consent forms, from the policy to a revised field trips procedure.
- Emphasizing the Board's duty to accommodate and also eliminate barriers for students in order to ensure equity of access, opportunities, and outcomes.
- Removing the requirement of schools to consult with their school councils when establishing an educational framework for the year's trips. This is

not one of the requirements of [Ontario Regulation 612/00](#) and is not implemented in schools. The revised procedure, however, requires principals to consult with school councils when fundraising money is used to fund school field trips.

- Expanding on the delegation to the Director of Education to develop procedures to include specific expectations for what will be included or addressed in the procedures.

6. Procedure Work

Staff have been undertaking an overhaul of the current field trips procedures in order to streamline the three procedures that currently exist and replace them with one simplified document. This work is planned to be shared with staff for input and feedback and will be public by the end of this school year. As indicated above, the procedures will operationalize the policy statements and directives articulated in the policy.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

7. There are no financial or resource implications relating to the proposed revisions to the Field Trips Policy.

COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION ISSUES:

8. Staff believe the proposed changes to the Field Trips Policy are not substantive in nature and do not alter the current direction, hence they propose placing this policy revision under Tier 2 Policy Revision. This tier includes internal consultations with the responsible departments, a legal, human rights, and equity review, as well as limited external consultations with the public through the District website.

On February 3, 2023, the current and draft versions of the Field Trips policy were shared with relevant stakeholders, seeking their input and suggestions for policy improvement. The consultation is planned to close on 24 February 2023.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- A. Does the policy adequately capture and express the policy considerations and commitments relevant to field trips?
- B. Does the revised policy address human rights and equity considerations?
- C. What other changes can be suggested to improve this version of the policy?

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Draft Policy P.029.SCO

Brett Reynolds
Associate Director
(ext. 8252)

Michele Giroux
Director of Education and
Secretary of the Board