

**TITLE:                   ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EQUITY**

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## **1.0 OBJECTIVE**

- 1.1 To establish an Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE) to advise the Board of Trustees in fulfilling its commitment to provide an equitable and inclusive educational and work environment which supports student achievement and well-being.

## **2.0 DEFINITIONS**

- 2.1 **Board** means Board of Trustees.
- 2.2 **Community Agencies or organizations** mean entities focused on serving youth and families with a diversity, equity, low income or inclusion lens.
- 2.3 **Community groups or associations** mean groups representative of communities that experience systemic barriers and marginalization.
- 2.4 **Creed** means a religious or non-religious belief system that influences a person's identity, worldview and way of life. A creed:
- (a) is sincerely, freely and deeply held;
  - (b) integrally linked to a person's identity, self-definition and fulfillment;
  - (c) is a particular and comprehensive, overarching system of belief that governs one's conduct and practices;
  - (d) addresses ultimate questions of human existence, including ideas about life, purpose, death, and the existence or non-existence of a Creator and/or a higher or different order of existence; and
  - (e) has some "nexus" or connection to an organization that professes a shared system of belief.

According to the Human Rights Code, creed includes the spiritual beliefs and practices of indigenous cultures.

- 2.5 **Diversity** refers to the presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, creed, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.
- 2.6 **District** means the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB).
- 2.7 **Equity** goes beyond treating people the same and takes into account their individual needs and differences.
- 2.8 **Inclusive Education** refers to education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected.
- 2.9 **LGBTQ2S+** means Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning, Two-Spirit, and additional sexual and gender identities.
- 2.10 **School Community** refers to students, parents/guardians, trustees, staff, contractors and service providers, volunteers and community members.
- 2.11 **Systemic barriers** are policies, practices or procedures that result in some people or groups of people receiving unequal access and/or outcomes or being excluded.

### 3.0 POLICY

#### Terms of Reference

- 3.1 The Advisory Committee on Equity shall:
- (a) provide strategic policy and program advice and/or recommendations on matters of diversity which support equitable education access and outcomes, student learning and well-being, and the development of citizenship;
  - (b) advise the Board of Trustees on the review, development, implementation, and monitoring of all policies and its equity strategy and programs;
  - (c) advise the Board of Trustees on the identification and elimination of systemic barriers to providing bias-aware education, including power dynamics, discrimination and marginalization that may impact the lived experience of members of the school community;
  - (d) liaise with community stakeholders by actively engaging parents and community partners to help create and sustain a safe and inclusive learning environment; and
  - (e) advise the Board on potential budget implications that may help or hinder its commitment to foster equitable and inclusive education.

## 4.0 SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES

### Composition

- 4.1 The Committee shall be comprised of up to 19 members, including eleven (11) voting members and up to eight (8) non-voting members.
- 4.2 The eleven (11) voting members shall include:
- (a) four (4) individual members; and
  - (b) seven (7) community members representative of community organizations, agencies, groups and/or associations.
- 4.3 The non-voting members shall include:
- (a) up to two (2) Trustees as appointed by the Board of Trustees;
  - (b) one (1) Superintendent of Instruction or designate;
  - (c) one (1) Diversity & Equity Coordinator;
- and may include:
- (d) one (1) representative appointed by the Student Senate;
  - (e) one (1) representative appointed by Ottawa-Carleton Elementary Teachers' Federation;
  - (f) one (1) representative appointed by Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation; and
  - (g) one (1) representative of a local post-secondary institution.
- 4.4 Additional employees of the District may be invited to attend, participate, and act as a resource to the Committee in a non-voting and non-membership capacity, as determined on an as needed basis.

### Membership Criteria

- 4.5 All applicants to the Committee shall have a strong interest in and commitment to student achievement and well-being and have:
- (a) knowledge and understanding of the link between equity and inclusive education;
  - (b) the ability to work effectively and collaboratively with representatives from various communities who may have diverse opinions and perspectives;
  - (c) tact, diplomacy and a respect for others;
  - (d) an enthusiastic approach and ability to motivate and support others; and

- (e) the ability and willingness to attend meetings during the school year.
- 4.6 Every effort shall be made to ensure that the four (4) individual members are:
- (a) parents/guardians with children enrolled in the OCDSB who represent the diverse demographic composition of the District; and/or
  - (b) members of the following identities:
    - (i) Creed-based;
    - (ii) Disability (e.g., physical, mental, and learning disabilities);
    - (iii) First Nations, Métis or Inuit;
    - (iv) Immigrants and newcomers to Canada;
    - (v) LGBTQ2S+ ; and/or
    - (vi) Racialized Groups.
- 4.7 Community organizations, agencies, groups and/or associations seeking membership on ACE shall be representative of communities experiencing systemic barriers and marginalization, and have diversity, equity and inclusion-centered mandate. These may include, but are not limited to the following:
- (a) Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN);
  - (b) Children's Aid Society;
  - (c) Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centers of Ottawa;
  - (d) Family Services Ottawa;
  - (e) Lebanese and Arab Social Services Agency;
  - (f) Ottawa Chinese Community Service Center;
  - (g) Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization (OCISO);
  - (h) Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership (OLIP);
  - (i) Ottawa Police Service;
  - (j) Pathways to Education;
  - (k) Rainbow Alliance arc-en-ciel;
  - (l) Somali Center For Family Services;

- (m) Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health ; and/or
- (n) Youth Services Bureau.

This list may be changed or expanded to reflect the District's demographic composition and its equity and inclusive education priorities.

#### Term of Office

- 4.8 The term of office for a voting member of the Committee shall be two (2) years beginning December 1.
- 4.9 Individual members may serve for no more than two (2) consecutive terms of office.
- 4.10 Community organizations or agencies may serve multiple consecutive terms but an individual representative of the organization or agency may serve for no more than two (2) consecutive terms of office.
- 4.11 Non-voting members are determined annually.

#### Appointment of Members

- 4.12 The Committee shall elect a Chair and a Vice Chair from amongst its eleven (11) voting members.
- 4.13 ACE shall review its membership needs and as required create a Membership Sub-Committee that includes the Chair and Vice-Chair, plus up to three (3) members, as nominated by the Committee.
- 4.14 The Membership Sub-Committee shall ensure that the voting members are selected using a fair and equitable process.
- 4.15 The Membership Sub-Committee shall,
  - (a) post a notice inviting applications for appointment of individual members;
  - (b) identify community agencies, organizations, groups or associations that meet the criteria stipulated in section 4.7 of this policy and best meet the needs of the Committee;
  - (c) invite identified community agencies, organizations, groups or associations to put forward the names of a representative and an alternate; and
  - (d) submit a recommendation to the Committee for the appointment of new members.

### Vacancies

- 4.16 A vacancy in the membership of the Committee does not prevent the Committee from delivering on its mandate.
- 4.17 A member shall lose their seat if absent from three consecutive regular meetings of the Committee without notice.
- 4.18 In the event that a voting-member vacates their position during the appointed term, the Committee may fill the position for the remainder of the term.
- 4.19 To replace a non-voting member, the Board, Student Senate or the District shall appoint another individual to the position. Where the non-voting member is a Trustee, the Board of Trustees shall make the appointment.

### Roles and Responsibilities of Members

- 4.20 All members of the Committee shall:
  - (a) demonstrate a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusive education in the work of the Committee and the District;
  - (b) attend and productively participate in Committee meetings;
  - (c) review all relevant material prior to the Committee meetings;
  - (d) participate in Committee and sub-committees work (as required);
  - (e) provide equity-focused input/feedback when they represent ACE at special meetings of the Board, Ad-Hoc or Advisory Committees; and
  - (f) bring to the attention of the Committee any issues related to its mission as stipulated in provision 3.1 of this policy.
- 4.21 In addition to the above, community agencies, organizations, groups and/or associations, and the student senator shall act as a liaison between ACE and their respective community groups or organizations.
- 4.22 Community agencies, organizations, groups and/or associations with membership on the Committee shall appoint a representative and an alternate to replace the named representative if the representative is unable to attend a meeting. Temporary substitution of a representative by a duly authorized alternate during the course of a meeting shall be allowed.
- 4.23 The Chair shall:
  - (a) plan the agenda in consultation with the Superintendent;
  - (b) preside over the Committee meetings;

- (c) act as a spokesperson and representative for the Committee in communicating with the Director of Education, Board of Trustees and the public;
- (d) review the minutes before they are circulated to members; and
- (e) share information and reports received from various stakeholders with the District, e.g., community organizations, individuals representing affected groups, etc.

4.24 The Vice Chair shall assume the roles and responsibilities of the Chair in the event of their absence.

4.25 The Secretary shall:

- (a) keep and maintain all records and property of the Committee including but not limited to records of minutes and reports of the Committee;
- (b) distribute Agendas and Minutes of all meetings to Board Services and committee members at least five (5) business days prior to the next meeting; and
- (c) ensure the minutes are provided to Board Services for distribution to the Board of Trustees and for posting on the District website.

#### Meetings

4.26 The Committee shall meet at least six (6) times in each school year.

4.27 All meetings of the Committee will be open to the public and be held at a location that is accessible to the public.

4.28 The Committee shall welcome and encourage the participation of the public at the discretion of the Chair.

4.29 The rules of order for the conduct of meetings shall be consistent with the OCDSB By-Laws and Standing Rules.

4.30 A notice of each regular meeting shall be provided to all members of the Committee at least five (5) days before the meeting.

4.31 A member who participates in a meeting by electronic means is considered to be present at the meeting and will be recorded in the attendance for the meeting.

#### Quorum

4.32 A meeting of the Committee achieves quorum when a majority of voting members are present. Majority is defined as fifty (50) percent plus one (1).

#### Voting

- 4.33 Each voting member is entitled to one (1) vote.
- 4.34 Non-voting members of the Committee shall have all the rights and obligations of voting members except for moving, seconding and voting on a motion, and counting for quorum.

#### Sub-committees

- 4.35 The Committee may establish sub-committees as it deems appropriate to the achievement of its mandate. Sub-committees may include voting and non-voting members and non-members.

#### Reporting

- 4.36 The Committee shall provide an annual report to the Board of Trustees which summarizes its activities and achievements during the past year and its plans for the upcoming year.
- 4.37 The Director of Education shall have the authority to establish procedures that are consistent with this policy.

## **5.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

*The Education Act, 1998, section 8.1 (29.1)*

Ontario Human Rights Commission Policy on Preventing Discrimination Based on Creed, 2015

Ontario's Equity Action Plan , 2017

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119, "Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools", June 24, 2009

Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009

OCDSB By-Laws and Standing Rules

Board Policy: P.001.GOV: Policy Development and Management

Board Policy P.010.GOV: Community Involvement on Board Standing Committees

Board Policy P.018.GOV: Electronic Meetings of the Board and Committees

Board Policy P.048.GOV: Board Guiding Principles

Board Policy P.065: Advisory Committees to the Board

Board Policy P.086.CUR Religious Accommodation

Board Policy P.098.CUR: Equity and Inclusive Education