

Compass Direction: Acknowledge and Recognize Identity

Goal: Create inclusive learning environments where all students and staff feel a strong sense of belonging, safety, and respect for their identities.

Actionable Item 1: Identity-Based Student Support Groups

Establish groups in secondary/intermediate schools based on student needs and interests.

Specific Practices:

- **Resource Allocation:** Principals identify and formally designate accessible meeting spaces for approved identity-based student groups (e.g., Black Excellence Clubs, Indigenous Student Councils, 2SLGBTQ+ Alliances, Jewish Student Unions) by the start of each school year;
- **Funding Support:** Principals allocate specific budget lines within the school budget to support group activities and resource needs, based on group proposals reviewed collaboratively with staff sponsors;
- **Staff Sponsorship:** Principals actively recruit willing staff sponsors for each approved group and ensure sponsors receive relevant OCDSB training and ongoing support for their role;
- **Student-Led Guidelines:** Staff sponsor(s) facilitate student-led development sessions where group members co-create their specific mandate, operating guidelines, confidentiality agreements, and meeting schedules within the first two months of group formation;
- **Representation & Voice:** Establish a clear pathway (e.g., representation on a Student Equity Council, scheduled meetings with administration) for identity-based groups to provide direct input on school improvement planning, policy reviews, and school climate initiatives and
- **Addressing Concerns:** Implement and communicate a transparent process for identity-based groups to formally raise concerns or suggestions to school administration and receive documented, timely responses and follow-up actions.

Actionable Item 2: Integrating Identity into Curriculum

(Integrate identity-affirming content and activities into curriculum across subject areas.)

Specific Practices:

- **Mandatory Foundational Learning:** Ensure all teaching staff complete required OCDSB professional learning modules focused on integrating Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Black histories/perspectives, 2SLGBTQ+ experiences, and understanding diverse religions/creeds into curriculum planning and delivery by assigned deadlines;

- School-Based Professional Learning: Incorporate dedicated time during PA days or staff meetings for collaborative sessions focused on sharing strategies and resources for applying Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy (CRRP) and integrating diverse identity perspectives within specific subject areas;
- Resource Audit & Update: Teachers conduct an annual review of their classroom libraries, digital resources, and learning materials to ensure diverse representation (racial, cultural, linguistic, gender identity/expression, ability, religion/creed) and supplement/update resources accordingly, utilizing OCDSB-approved resource lists;
- Diverse Voices in Learning: Actively seek out and incorporate diverse guest speakers, community members, and multimedia resources (art, music, film, literature) that authentically represent a wide range of identities and lived experiences relevant to the curriculum;
- Identity Exploration Activities: Educators design and implement specific learning activities or assessment options within units (e.g., project-based learning, inquiry projects, choice boards) that provide students opportunities to explore, reflect on, and express aspects of their own intersecting identities in safe and affirming ways;
- Disability Inclusion Learning: Ensure relevant staff access and apply OCDSB professional learning and resources focused on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Differentiated Instruction (DI), and specific strategies for creating inclusive and accessible learning environments for students with physical and/or learning disabilities; and
- Religious Literacy & Respect: Regularly promote staff awareness and use of the OCDSB multifaith calendar and provide clear guidance on implementing religious accommodation procedures (PR.586.SCO) respectfully and effectively.

Actionable Item 3: Addressing Incidents of Bias, Discrimination, or Hate

(Address all reported incidents with clear action plans, follow-up support, and preventative measures.)

Specific Practices:

- Protocol Communication: Annually, principals communicate the clear, step-by-step school and board protocols (including the Human Rights Reporting Form process and Anti-Hate Protocol) for reporting incidents of bias, discrimination, or hate to all students, staff, and families using multiple methods (e.g., presentations, handbooks, website, newsletters);
- Timely Investigation & Response: School administration initiates timely investigations following established OCDSB procedures upon receiving any report of bias, discrimination, or hate;
- Documented Action & Support: Following investigation, administration documents findings, implements appropriate and documented consequences (using a balance of disciplinary, educative, and restorative approaches), and ensures documented follow-up support is offered and provided to all individuals impacted by the incident;
- Preventative Campaigns: School supports and facilitates annual student-led (where appropriate) awareness campaigns or initiatives focused on promoting respect for diversity, anti-bullying, anti-racism, and anti-hate messages;

- Targeted Staff Training: Conduct specific staff training sessions, potentially during staff meetings or PA days, focusing on identifying and disrupting microaggressions, bias, and hate incidents, utilizing tools like the anti-hate toolkit and the CLAIM model for repairing harm;
- Restorative Practice Implementation: Actively promote and utilize restorative practices training among staff to address conflict, repair harm resulting from identity-based incidents, and build a culture of belonging and accountability; and
- Provide targeted professional learning aimed at equipping staff to better support diverse student academic achievement and equitably apply mitigating factors, particularly concerning suspensions. This training must address diverse identities (Indigenous, Black, 2SLGBTQ+, disabled, religious/creed), histories, anti-oppression, anti-racism, cultural responsiveness, and implicit bias.

Actionable Item 4: Advancing Indigenous Language Revitalization and Cultural Visibility

Support access to Indigenous languages and amplify Indigenous presence and culture within school environments to affirm Indigenous identities and foster inclusive learning.

Specific Practices:

- Cultural & Language Integration: Expand the use of Indigenous language signage, land acknowledgements, daily announcements, and cultural displays throughout school buildings to increase visibility and promote a sense of belonging.
- Student-Led Initiatives: Promote and support student-led language and cultural projects that empower Indigenous students to share their heritage and contribute to school culture.
- Language Electives: Explore and develop options for Indigenous language electives within the curriculum to provide structured opportunities for language acquisition and cultural immersion.
- Pathways for Educators: Create accessible pathways for Indigenous language educators, including those who may not hold Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) certification, to teach Indigenous languages within the school board.