

# **DRAFT EQUITY POLICY-SUPPORTING GUIDELINES:** **GENDER EQUITY**

## **1.0 POLICIES, GUIDELINES AND PRACTICES**

### **Guiding Principle**

*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.*

#### *Commitment to Equity*

- 1.1 The HWDSB is committed to ensuring that all policies, guidelines, procedures and practices (including but not limited to classroom practices, day to day operations and communication practices) are free from sexism, transphobia, and gender-related biases and stereotypes and reflect the principles of gender equity.
- 1.2 The HWDSB is committed to identifying and eliminating sexist, transphobic, gender-related biases and stereotypes, as well as barriers in Board policies, guidelines, day to day operations, protocols and practices.
- 1.3 The HWDSB will establish practices and procedures to ensure compliance with the *Equity Policy - Supporting Guidelines: Gender Equity* and to ensure these are accessible to all.

#### *Accountability*

- 1.4 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will establish a transparent review process and timeframe to monitor and assess the effectiveness of the *Equity Policy -Supporting Guidelines: Gender Equity* which will include community consultation and a report to the community.

## **2.0 LEADERSHIP**

### **Guiding Principle**

*The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to providing leadership, at all levels, that fosters an equitable environment.*

#### *Commitment to Equity*

- 2.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to providing leadership at all levels that fosters an environment of respect for all people regardless of sex or gender and will raise awareness of issues related to sexism, transphobia, and gender-related biases and stereotypes throughout the Board's jurisdiction.

#### *Staff Development*

- 2.2 The leadership of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, as part of its Strategic Directions, will provide learning opportunities related to equity education as it pertains to sexism, transphobia, and gender-related biases and stereotypes for all members of its staff and school communities. This commitment will be reflected in implementation and school/service

improvement plans to assist Trustees, Administrators, Managers, staff, students and members of the school community in developing the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours required to implement the *Equity Policy - Supporting Guidelines: Gender Equity*.

#### *Removal of Barriers*

- 2.3 The leadership of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will strive to ensure that educational practices are inclusive and reflect the contributions of persons of all genders including the diverse groups of girls and women in our communities. Further, it will strive to ensure that all forms of stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, sexism, and **gender-based violence** are challenged and eliminated.

### **3.0 SCHOOL COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

#### **Guiding Principle**

*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.*

#### *Commitment to Equity*

- 3.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board recognizes that school communities include people of all genders and gender identities and will promote active engagement to ensure inclusive school community partnerships.

#### *Cultural Interpretation*

- 3.2 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide multiple opportunities for communication - using a variety of strategies - to enable participation from all gender and transgender communities in the development, implementation, application and review of the Board's policies.

#### *Removal of Barriers*

- 3.3 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will identify and remove all unlawful barriers related to gender and gender identities in its community partnership practices. The Board will strive to remove other barriers as they are identified.
- 3.4 School councils and other school initiatives or activities endorsed by or affiliated with the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will be welcoming to people of all genders and gender identities.

#### *Community Partners*

- 3.5 All Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board partners involved in Co-operative Education, Community Service, and Work-related Experiences will be advised of the *HWDSB Equity Policy - Supporting Guidelines: Gender Equity* and will be expected to provide HWDSB students and staff with a learning and working environment that is free from all forms of discrimination including sexism, transphobia, and gender-related biases and stereotypes

## 4.0 CURRICULUM

### Guiding Principle

*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. The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board acknowledges that inequities exist in the curriculum; therefore, the Board is committed to **enabling all persons** to see themselves reflected in the curriculum. The Board is further committed to providing each student with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours needed to live in a complex and diverse world.*

#### *Commitment to Equity*

- 4.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will strive to ensure that the principles and practices of gender equity and anti-sexism permeate the curriculum in all subject areas by:
- ~ examining and challenging curriculum that traditionally has been male-dominated or ignores the experiences of women of diverse backgrounds and transgender persons in order to ensure inclusivity;
  - ~ developing a process to determine whether sexism, transphobia, gender biases, and stereotypes as well as **gender-based violence** are present in the curriculum;
  - ~ ensuring that materials, programs and program delivery do not promote sexism, transphobia, gender biases and stereotypes as well as hatred and/or **gender-based** violence;
  - ~ providing adequate resources and training: to use materials, programs, and program delivery effectively to promote critical-thinking skills; and to identify and challenge bias and stereotypical assumptions.
- 4.2 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will allocate learning resources to challenge sexism, **gender-based violence** and hate propaganda based on gender **and gender identity**.

#### *Staff Development*

- 4.3 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide staff with professional development to examine teaching practices and learning experiences for discriminatory bias related to gender **and gender identity**. This professional development will enable staff to employ **differentiated** teaching practices for delivery of program that is free of sexism, transphobia, and gender-related biases and stereotypes **and that is intended to maximize the learning potential of all students**.

## 5.0 STUDENT LANGUAGES

### Guiding Principle

*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 official languages.*

#### *Commitment to Equity*

- 5.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board values and respects all languages and cultures.

- 5.2 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will strive to ensure that both its communication practices and communications with staff, students, parents/guardians and the community at large will be free from sexism, transphobia, and gender-related biases and stereotypes.
- 5.3 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will strive to ensure that resources are available to schools and departments to enable appropriate communications with staff, students, parents/guardians, and the community at large.
- 5.4 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will strive to provide language learning programming that is free from sexism, transphobia, and gender-related biases and stereotypes and will ensure that students' gender identities are valued and affirmed.

## 6.0 STUDENT ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION, REPORTING AND PLACEMENT

### Guiding Principle

*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.*

### *Commitment to Equity*

- 6.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will ensure that its assessment, evaluation, reporting, and placement practices and procedures are free of sexism, transphobia, and gender stereotyping; furthermore, these practices and procedures **will be differentiated** to meet individual student needs and offer students opportunities to reach their highest potential.
- 6.2 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will ensure that its placement and programming practices and procedures are free from discriminatory biases related to gender and gender identity.
- 6.3 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will identify and eliminate discrimination and barriers by identifying, reviewing, and changing practices that lead to the streaming of students into programs on the basis of gender or gender identity so as not to limit education and life opportunities.
- 6.4 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will collaborate with students, parents/guardians, and caregivers by informing them of assessment, evaluation, reporting and placement practices and procedures. This collaborative process must consider gender and its interconnections to cultural and linguistic factors, faith, sexual orientation and gender identity, socio-economic factors, disabilities, personal/family experiences, previous education, students' future expectations, and students' rights to continuity, stability, and community belonging. The process includes:
  - ~ making informed placement decisions which are re-evaluated **as required**;
  - ~ implementing strategies to ensure that the abilities and goals of students are not under- or over-estimated on the basis of gender-bias and gender identity;
  - ~ ensuring that gender-bias does not adversely impact on programming, placement, and academic decisions and that students, with the support of their parents/guardians and caregivers (as appropriate), are able to consider and make informed programming, placement, and academic decisions.

## **7.0 COUNSELING/GUIDANCE/SUPPORT SERVICES**

### **Guiding Principle**

*The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide Counseling, Guidance and Support Services that reflect the principles of equity.*

#### *Commitment to Equity*

- 7.1 All Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board programs addressing students' personal needs, as well as their academic and career choices, will be delivered in a manner that is free from sexism, transphobia, and gender-related biases and stereotypes.
- 7.2 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will ensure that Counseling, Guidance and Support Services are free from sexism, transphobia, and gender-related biases and stereotypes. The confidentiality and privacy of the students accessing and utilizing these services will be protected within the boundaries of existing legal framework.
- 7.3 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will strive to include representation from Transgender students, families and community organizations in Counseling, Guidance and Support Service program development and review processes.
- 7.4 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will ensure that its Counseling, Guidance and Support Service programs do not under- or over-estimate the potential of students because of sexism, transphobia and gender-related biases and stereotypes.
- 7.5 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will encourage and support students and their families in the identification and consideration of non-traditional career options based on gender identity.

#### *Cultural Interpretation*

- 7.6 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will ensure that communication strategies are in place to keep all parents/guardians and caregivers informed about their children's current educational achievement, progress, and their plans for the future, in a language they understand, and including the provision of translations where necessary.

## **8.0 HARASSMENT AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

### **Guiding Principle**

*The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will ensure that harassment on the basis of gender or gender identity and/or gender-based violence by trustees, employees, parents, volunteers, students, and the community at large will not be tolerated.*

#### *Staff*

- 8.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's Harassment, Safe Schools, and/or Respectful Working and Learning Environments Policies will be applied for reporting, responding to and

resolving incidents of harassment based on gender and gender identity as well as incidents of gender-based violence. Every individual has the right to report these incidents without fear of reprisal and every complaint will be investigated confidentially in order to protect the rights of all individuals.

#### *Staff Development*

- 8.2 Through professional development, the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide staff with the knowledge, skills, and resources to identify and respond to harassment on the basis of gender and gender identity as well as gender-based violence.
- 8.3 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will communicate its commitment to safe schools and workplaces for all persons regardless of gender or gender identity by ensuring that Staff, Trustees, students, parent/guardians and community members are aware of the Harassment Policy; Safe Schools Policy; Respectful Working and Learning Environments Policy; and Equity Policy.

#### *Accountability*

- 8.4 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will develop an accountability process to monitor and report instances of harassment on the basis of gender and gender-identity as well as gender-based violence.

## **9.0 EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES**

### **Guiding Principle**

*The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's employment policies, practices and procedures will be fair and equitable, and will not discriminate based on gender and gender-identity.*

#### *Commitment to Equity*

- 9.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's recruitment, interview, selection, training, placement, and promotion practices and procedures will not discriminate based on sexism, transphobia, and gender-related biases and stereotypes and will endeavour to identify and eliminate systemic barriers to obtaining and maintaining employment.
- 9.2 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will endeavour to provide interview teams that are aware of and sensitive to issues of sexism, transphobia, and gender-related biases and stereotypes.
- 9.3 The procedures for progressive discipline, performance appraisal, review and reporting will be free from sexism, transphobia, and gender-related biases and stereotypes.
- 9.4 Human Resources practices, policies and procedures will be a part of the annual report and reviewed for sexism, transphobia, and gender-related biases and stereotypes.
- 9.5 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will ensure that the Board's commitment to anti-sexism and gender equity is communicated throughout the Board, and that staff, students, and community are aware of this commitment.

## 10.0 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

### Guiding Principle

*The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide equity training and resources for trustees and all employee groups.*

#### *System Level*

- 10.1 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will identify staff development needs to enable trustees and staff to develop the knowledge, skills and resources necessary to implement the *Equity Policy - Supporting Guidelines: Gender Equity*.
- 10.2 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will implement professional development programs to enable trustees and staff to understand, identify and challenge bias, stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination based upon gender and gender-identity.
- 10.3 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide training to empower staff to deal effectively, sensitively, and confidently with issues of sexism, transphobia, gender bias, gender-based violence, and discrimination.
- 10.4 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will provide staff with the professional development, information, skills, and resources needed to teach, work, and learn in environments that are free from sexism, transphobia, and gender bias.
- 10.5 The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will involve, as appropriate, community groups who advocate on behalf of Gender Equity in the design and delivery of development programs.**

## GLOSSARY

*The following are key terms in the area of equity pertinent to this document.*

### **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.

### **Accountability**

Refers to the process whereby organizations and institutions as members of a diverse community are subject to the obligation to maintain a certain level of ethics and responsiveness and reporting regarding the quality, effectiveness and relevance of their service or practices and the method of delivery.

Refer to: Strengthening Hamilton's Community Initiative, *Anti-Racism Framework*, 2003.

### **Annual System Initiatives**

Priorities established by The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board for each school year.

### **Anti-classism and Socio-economic Equity**

Akin to antiracism, the principles of Anti-classism and Socio-economic Equity strive to ameliorate the effects of classism and discrimination based upon socio-economic status. Specifically, Anti-classism and Socio-economic Equity initiatives attempt to provide equality of outcome by removing barriers impeding access to goods and services for marginalized socio-economic groups.

### **Antiracism Education**

An approach to education that integrates the perspectives and knowledges of Indigenous Peoples and racial, ethnic, cultural and religious groups into an educational system and its practices. The aim of antiracism education is the elimination of racism in all its forms. Antiracism education seeks to identify and change educational policies, procedures, and practices that foster racism, as well as the racist attitudes and behaviour that underlie and reinforce such policies and practices. Antiracism education provides teachers and students with the knowledge and skills to examine racism critically in order to understand how it originates and to identify and respond to it.

### **At-Risk Students**

The Chairs of the Expert Panels on Students at Risk in *Building Pathways to Success: The Report of the Program Pathways for Students at Risk Work Group*, Toronto, 2003 defined At-Risk students as:

- Elementary students who are performing at level 1, or below grade expectations;
- Secondary students who would have studied at the Modified or Basic level in the previous curriculum;
- Secondary students who are performing significantly below the provincial standard, earning marks in the 50s and low 60s and who do not have the foundations to be successful in the new curriculum;
- Students who are disengaged, with very poor attendance;

Committee would like to add "Students at-risk of not graduating or successfully entering the workplace" to the Ministry definition above.

### **Barriers**

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

## **Best Practice**

A best practice is “a working method or set of working methods, which is officially accepted as being the best to use in a particular business or industry, usually described in detail.

Refer to: *Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary*

## **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*

## **Community Consultation**

A formal or informal dialogue with the community.

## **Community Partnerships**

Collaborative relationships between institutions and groups within the community in which there is recognition of the experience of participants and evidence of their involvement in the decision making of the institutions.

## **Counselling/Guidance/Support Services**

The process whereby skilled and informed persons assist in the resolution of difficulties and/or choosing of options which are in the best interests of an individual or group.

## **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 Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation*, 1993.

**Curriculum**

Curriculum encompasses all learning experiences the student will have in school. These include school environment, interactions among students, staff and the community, and the values, attitudes and behaviours conveyed by the school.

**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*.

**Early School Leavers**

Colloquially known as “dropouts”, Early School Leavers are students who have ceased to attend secondary school without achieving an Ontario Secondary School Diploma, Ontario Secondary School Certificate or Certificate of Accomplishment.

**Employment Equity**

A program designed to remove systemic barriers to equality of outcome in employment by identifying and eliminating discriminatory policies and practices, remedying the effects of past discrimination, and ensuring appropriate representation of designated groups. Employment equity programs usually involve setting goals and timelines in order to ensure that defined objectives are met by a specified date.

**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*.

**Ethnic**

Pertaining to ethnicity.

**Ethnicity**

Like race, is socially, politically and historically constructed, and is subject to the ambiguities and contradictions that are to be found in societies. It is dynamic. Its meanings change over time. Nevertheless, ethnicity serves to establish status allocation, role expectations and group membership.

Refer to: Carl E. James, *Seeing Ourselves: Exploring Race, Ethnicity and Culture*, Toronto, 1995.

**Ethnocultural Group**

A group of people who share a particular cultural heritage or background. Every Canadian belongs to an ethnic group. Refer to terms ethnicity and culture.

**Eurocentric Curriculum**

A curriculum that focuses primarily on the experiences and achievements of people of European background. Such a curriculum inevitably marginalizes the experiences and achievements of people of other backgrounds.

## **First Languages**

A person's native language or mother tongue.

Refer to: *The Oxford Canadian Dictionary*, 1998

### **Gender (Draft Definition)**

**Those characteristics of women and men that are socially constructed. Sex refers to those characteristics of males and females that are biologically determined.**

**Refer to: *Shaping A Culture Of Respect In Our Schools*, Ontario Safe Schools Action Team, 2008**

### **Gender-based Violence (Draft Definition)**

**Any form of behaviour – including psychological, physical, and sexual behaviour – that is based on an individual's gender and is intended to control, humiliate, or harm the individual. This form of violence is generally directed at women, girls, and transgender persons and is based on an attitude or prejudice, which can be conscious or unconscious and which exists on the individual and institutional level, that aims to subordinate an individual or group on the basis of sex and/or gender identity.**

**(Adapted from Peter Jaffe and Ray Hughes, "Preventing Violence against Girls", *Education Forum* 34[3] [Fall 2008] [Toronto: OSSTF/FEESO])**

### **Gender Identity (Draft Definition)**

Gender Identity is linked to an individual's intrinsic sense of self and, particularly the sense of being male or female. Gender identity may or may not conform to a person's birth assigned sex. The personal characteristics that are associated with gender identity include self-image, physical and biological appearance, expression, behaviour and conduct, as they relate to gender.

Refer to: [Policy on Discrimination and Harassment because of Gender Identity](#) Ontario Human Rights Commission

## **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.

## **Indigenous Knowledges**

The knowledges of the first founding peoples that have been shared through an oral tradition.

## **Indigenous Peoples**

First founding peoples.

**Indigenous Perspectives**

The view of Indigenous peoples as influenced by their knowledges, values, traditions and historical experiences.

**Leadership**

The Board of Trustees, Senior Administration and any person placed in a position of added responsibility within The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board.

**Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Persons or Communities**

This terminology is used throughout the document to identify 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 Steering Committee

**Minority Knowledges/Perspectives**

The knowledges/perspectives of minority groups that have historically been silenced and marginalized.

**Outcome**

A result or visible effect.

Refer to: *The Oxford Canadian Dictionary*, 1998

**Personal Needs**

Physical, emotional, social, interpersonal, and spiritual needs.

**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.

**Race**

Race is a social category used to classify humankind according to common ancestry or descent and reliant upon differentiation by general physical characteristics such as a colour or skin and eyes, hair type, stature and facial features. There is no scientific evidence for race. It is socially constructed.

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.

**Sex (Draft Definition)**

Sex refers to a person's genetic or anatomical sex; there are also associated psychological and behavioural norms related to a person's sex.

Refer to: Towards A Commission Policy on Gender Identity Ontario Human Rights Commission

**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*

**Sexism (Draft Definition)**

Sexism stems from a set of implicit or explicit beliefs, erroneous assumptions and actions based upon an ideology of inherent superiority of one gender over another and may be evident within organizational or institutional structures or programs, as well as within individual thought or behaviour patterns. Sexism is any act or institutional practice, backed by institutional power which subordinates people because of gender. While, in principle, sexism may be practiced by either gender, most of our societal institutions are still the domain of men and usually the impact of sexism is experienced by women.

Refer to: Canadian Race Relations Federation

**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.

**Socio-economically Marginalized Communities**

Socio-economically Marginalized Communities are communities whose members have incomes barely or insufficient to meet basic human needs.

Refer to: M. Adams, L. Bell, P. Griffin, *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook* New York, 1997.

**Stakeholders**

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

**Staff**

Any person employed by the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board.

**Stereotype** *(Draft Definition)*

A fixed mental picture or image of a group of people, ascribing the same characteristic(s) to all members of the group, regardless of their individual differences. An over-generalization, in which the information or experience on which the image is based may be true for some of the individual group members, but not for all members. Stereotyping may be based upon misconceptions, incomplete information and/or false generalizations about race, age, ethnic, linguistic, geographical or natural groups, religions, social, marital or family status, physical, developmental or mental attributes, gender or sexual orientation.

Refer to Canadian Race Relations Federation

**Transgender** *(Draft Definition)*

Transgender describes individuals who are not comfortable with, or who reject, in whole or in part, their birth assigned gender identities. The word Transgender is generally viewed as an umbrella term that unifies people who identify as transsexual, transgenderist, intersexed, transvestite or as a cross-dresser.

Refer to: Policy on Discrimination and Harassment because of Gender Identity Ontario Human Rights Commission

**Transphobia** *(Draft Definition)*

Transphobia is the unrealistic or irrational fear and hatred of cross-dressers, transsexuals and transgenderists. Like all prejudices, it is based on negative stereotypes and misconceptions that are then used to justify and support hatred, discrimination, harassment, and violence toward people who are Transgender.

Refer to: Policy on Discrimination and Harassment because of Gender Identity Ontario Human Rights Commission

**Working Poor**

The working poor are a socio-economic group who live at or below the Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) established by Statistics Canada to designate a family or individual with a low-income as compared to other members of the community. For families, the LICO is set at the level at which a family spends 20% more of their pre-tax income on food, shelter and clothing than the average family in their community would spend on those necessities. The LICO is commonly known as the “poverty line”.

## SOURCES

- M. Adams, L. Bell, P. Griffin, *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook* New York, 1997.
- Carl E. James, *Seeing Ourselves: Exploring Race, Ethnicity and Culture*, Toronto, Canada, 1995
- *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom – Equality Rights*

- Chairs of the Expert Panels on Students at Risk, *Building Pathways to Success: The Report of the Program Pathways for Students at Risk Work Group*, Toronto, 2003.
- *Employment Equity Act*
- Fran Endicott and Alok Mukherjee, *A Glossary of Terms* developed for a workshop on anti-discriminatory organizational change.
- Ministry of Education, *Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation, 1993 Ontario Human Rights Code*
- Strengthening Hamilton's Community Initiative, *Anti-Racism Framework, 2003*.
- J. Doug Wilms, *Vulnerable Children*, 2002, pg. 337.

## LEGISLATIVE PRINCIPLES

### CANADIAN CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS – EQUALITY RIGHTS

**15. (1)** Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

**15. (2)** Subsection (1) does not preclude any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

### ONTARIO HUMAN RIGHTS CODE

*...recognition of the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world and is in accord with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as proclaimed by the United Nations; ...it is public policy in Ontario to recognize the dignity and worth of every person and to provide for equal rights and opportunities without discrimination that is contrary to law, and having as its aim the creation of a climate of understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of each person so that each person feels a part of the community and able to contribute fully to the development and well-being of the community and Province.*

### PART I: Freedom from Discrimination

- 1.** Every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to services, goods and facilities, without discrimination because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status or handicap.
- 5. (1)** Every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to employment without discrimination because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, record of offences, marital status, family status or handicap.
  - (2)** Every person who is an employee has a right to freedom from harassment in the workplace by the employer or agent of the employer or by another employee because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, age, record of offences, marital status, family status or handicap.
- 7. (2)** Every person who is an employee has a right to freedom from harassment in the workplace because of sex by his or her employer or agent of the employer or by another employee.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### EMPLOYMENT EQUITY ACT (Former Legislation)

#### **An Act to provide for Employment Equity for Aboriginal People, People with Disabilities, Members of Racial Minorities and Women.**

*The people of Ontario have recognized in the Human Rights Code the inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family and have recognized those rights in respect of employment in such statutes as the Employment Standards Act and the Pay Equity Act. This Act extends principles of those Acts and has as its object the amelioration of conditions in employment for Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, members of racial minorities and women in all workplaces in Ontario and the provision of the opportunity for people in these groups to fulfil their potential in employment.*

1. (1) All people are entitled to equal treatment in accordance with the Human Rights Code.
2. The following principles of employment equity apply throughout Ontario:
  1. Every Aboriginal person, every person with a disability, every member of a racial minority and every woman is entitled to be considered for employment, hired, retained, treated and promoted free from barriers, including systemic and deliberate practices and policies, that discriminate against them as an Aboriginal person, as a person with a disability, as a member of a racial minority or as a woman.
  2. Every employer's workforce, in all occupational categories and at all levels of employment, shall reflect the representation of Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, members of racial minorities and women in the community.
  3. Every employer shall ensure that its employment policies and practices, including policies and practices with respect to recruitment, hiring, retention, treatment, are free from barriers, both systemic and deliberate, that discriminate against Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, members of racial minorities and women.
  4. Every employer shall implement positive measures with respect to the recruitment, hiring, retention, treatment and promotion of Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, members of racial minorities and women.
  5. Every employer shall implement supportive measures with respect to the recruitment, hiring, retention, treatment and promotion of Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, members of racial minorities and women which also benefit the employer's workforce as a whole.