

## **KEY FOUNDATIONS**

The Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy's objectives and actions are based on three key foundations necessary to realizing equity in Ontario schools: shared and committed leadership, inclusive schools and classrooms, and accountability and communication.

### **Objectives and Action Plans**

Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy will bring educators together, at every level of the education system, to identify and remove discriminatory barriers and provide supports so that every student has the opportunity to achieve to his or her highest potential.

### **Shared and Committed Leadership**

Equity is a shared responsibility. Establishing a truly equitable and inclusive education system requires commitment from all levels. All partners in education, within the ministry, boards and schools, have a critical role to play in leading the identification and removal of bias, discrimination, and barriers to an inclusive education system. In particular, research has shown that to truly effect change, leadership — at the provincial, board, and school levels — must be committed to this principle.

Within the scope of the three associated objectives:

- 1. Ministry and boards will have in place policies and programs that reflect the government's commitment to equity and inclusive education.*
- 2. Ministry and boards will initiate, build and maintain strong partnerships with their diverse communities.*

### **The Ministry will:**

- Through the newly-established Inclusive Education Branch, promote development of equitable and inclusive education policies and practices in the Ministry, school boards, and schools
- Use the Equity Strategy to provide a framework for the government's commitment to equity and inclusive education, and for the development of board and school policies.
- Issue a new Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) and Resource Guide to assist boards in the development and implementation of equity and inclusive education policies.
- Build equity and inclusive education principles into Ministry policies and programs.
- Work with Faculties of Education and the Ontario College of Teachers so that equity and inclusive education are included in pre-service and in-service teacher education programs
- Continue to implement the Ontario Public Service Diversity Strategy within the Ministry to create an inclusive work environment
- Support school board implementation of equity strategies through the analysis of data to help inform Ministry, board and school planning
- Establish a provincial advisory group with representation from diverse community groups and the education sector, including students.
- Initiate, build and maintain strong and inclusive community partnerships.

**School Boards will:**

- Review or develop and implement equity and inclusive education policies, programs and action plans
- As part of equity and inclusive education policy, have religious accommodations guidelines in place that are consistent with the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the equity strategy, and communicate these guidelines to the school community
- Monitor and assess board progress in implementing equity and inclusive education policies, programs and practices
- Actively engage the community to provide representation of diverse groups in board committees
- Initiate, build and maintain strong and inclusive community partnerships.

**Schools will:**

- Implement board equity and inclusive education policies, programs and action plans that are consistent with Ministry policies to reflect the needs of diverse school communities
- Actively engage the community to provide representation of diverse groups in school committees
- Initiate, build and maintain strong and inclusive community partnerships.

## **Inclusive Schools and Classrooms**

In an equitable education system, students feel engaged and empowered by what they are learning, from whom they are learning, and through the environment in which they are learning. Students, teachers and staff must be empowered to develop inclusive education practices, and to provide a learning environment that is respectful, supportive and welcoming to all.

Within the scope of the three associated objectives:

- 1. Professional learning, leadership development and resources will be provided so that school boards and schools will have the capacity to support inclusive schools and classrooms.*
- 2. Curriculum and instructional practices will both reflect and support the local and broader communities we serve.*
- 3. Students will be actively engaged in the review, development, and implementation of equity and inclusive education-related initiatives.*

### **The Ministry will:**

- Develop and support professional learning on equity and inclusive education for staff working in boards and schools
- Work with stakeholders to create and facilitate the sharing of resources including through a website and an e-network
- Continue to infuse equity and inclusive education-related expectations in curriculum, resource and assessment documents

- Identify and develop models of implementation to demonstrate effective practices in assessments which address equity and inclusion requirements
- Develop new equity and inclusive education-related courses at the secondary level and provide training to support implementation of the suite of new courses
- Continue to support the First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework and the Aménagement Linguistique Policy.
- Review and/or revise student assessment and/or evaluation policies and practices, and where necessary recommend alternative assessment measures to provide consistency with equity and inclusive education principles.
- Develop and make available on the ministry website a School Climate Survey for students, parents and school staff to help identify issues and inform actions for improvement in terms of equity and inclusive education
- Provide leadership in the coordination of services for students, including students with special needs, among the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Children and Youth Services, and Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

**School Boards will:**

- Provide opportunities for students, administrators, teachers, support staff, and trustees, to participate in equity and inclusive education training and leadership initiatives
- Develop and implement strategies to actively engage students, parents and the broader community

- Identify and/or develop inclusive classroom strategies that reflect school-wide equity and inclusive education policies and practices
- Put in place procedures that will enable students to report incidents of discrimination and harassment

**Schools will:**

- Implement inclusive classroom strategies that reflect school-wide equity and inclusive education policies and practices
- Develop and implement strategies to actively engage students, parents and the broader community in the review, development, and implementation of equity and inclusive education related initiatives
- Implement procedures to respond to student reports on incidents of discrimination and harassment in a timely manner

**Accountability and Communication**

A shared understanding of targets and indicators of success for the ministry, boards and schools is needed to demonstrate that progress toward equity is making a difference in the lives of students. Transparency in communicating our progress to the community is also necessary to enhance public confidence in the education system.

Within the scope of the two associated objectives:

*1. Ontarians will recognize, and have confidence in, an equitable educational system that adheres to high standards and ensures that every student can achieve his or her highest potential.*

*2. Measurable outcomes will be clearly defined so that Ontario's education system is both accountable and transparent.*

**The Ministry will:**

- Develop procedures to support and monitor Ministry and board progress in implementing equity and inclusive education policies, programs and practices
- Work with stakeholders to develop performance measures
- Communicate successes to the education community, parents and the public.

**School Boards will:**

- Actively communicate their policies, procedures and practices to students, teachers, parents (including those whose first language is not English or French), school staff, school councils and volunteers
- Embed equity and inclusive education goals in Board and School Improvement Plans
- Report on progress in the Director's Annual Report
- Review /establish processes to determine the effectiveness of their policies and procedures, including performance indicators

**Schools will:**

- Create School Improvement Plans that are aligned with the equity and inclusive education strategy and contain references to equity and inclusive education
- Review /establish self-assessment processes to determine the effectiveness of their plans and procedures
- Report on their progress which will be included in their Director's Annual Report