

CODE: HAAB.BP**EFFECTIVE DATE:** (09-06-2009)**TOPIC:** Anti-racism and Equity**ISSUE DATE:** (22-06-2021)**REVIEW YEAR:** (2028)

PURPOSE

To affirm the Board of Trustees' (the Board) responsibility for providing a welcoming, inclusive, safe and healthy learning and working environment; one that respects diversity, commits to anti-racism and fosters a sense of belonging throughout the Division.

To affirm the Board's commitment to addressing individual, institutional and systemic racism and inequity in the public school system.

To promote an environment of anti-racism that recognizes diversity as a strength and values diversity in its schools, staff and communities.

To affirm the Board's commitment to developing positive relationships with staff, families and community members and working together in support of student success.

DEFINITIONS

Anti-racism: is the proactive and consistent process of identifying, challenging, preventing and eliminating racism. It uses direct action to acknowledge where privilege exists, raise awareness, advocate for change and challenge beliefs (such as prejudice, bias and stereotypes) at the personal and institutional level to create and implement action to fight racism for individuals and within an organization, workforce or group.

Racism: includes conscious and unconscious discriminatory or derogatory attitudes, microaggressions, comments or actions directed at marginalized groups relative to race or culture. It is based on assumptions, perceptions, social constructs, lack of knowledge or personal beliefs of superiority. Racism occurs in the context of a power and privilege imbalance and can be experienced at the individual, institutional or systemic level. In this context:

- **Individual racism** refers to an individual expressing racist assumptions, beliefs or behaviours and is a form of racial discrimination, whether expressed overtly or covertly.
- **Institutional racism** occurs when institutions create or maintain racial inequity, often as a result of hidden biases in policies, practices and procedures that privilege some groups and disadvantage others.
- **Systemic racism** occurs when racist assumptions, beliefs or behaviours are reinforced by systems of power that perpetuate racial group inequity. Systemic racism involves dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed racial privileges and inequities to endure and adapt over time.

Cultural Diversity: refers to the presence of all diverse groups in an organization and community and acknowledges and values their socio-cultural differences and their cultural expressions and contributions within the organization and community.

Discrimination: is negative differential treatment of a person or group on the basis of race, religious beliefs, ethnicity, language, colour, gender, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, gender identity and/or gender expression or sexual orientation.

Diversity: refers to the uniqueness of human differences. It includes ways of being, doing and knowing.

Equity: is achieved in an educational institution when students with diverse backgrounds, lived experiences and needs are fully able to participate in the benefits of an education. Equity involves providing each learner with the type and amount of support needed to be successful, including culturally relevant and responsive environments and resources. Students are provided the opportunity to experience success and human dignity while developing the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to contribute as citizens in society.

Implicit Bias: refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions and decisions in an unconscious manner.

Inclusive: an inclusive education system is a way of thinking and acting that demonstrates acceptance of, and belonging for, all students. It is founded on the belief that all children can learn and reach their full potential given opportunity, effective teaching and appropriate resources. An inclusive education system supports every student to be included and feel represented within their greater school community.

Intercultural Understanding: learning from and engaging with diverse cultures in ways that support commonalities and differences, create connections with others and cultivate mutual respect.

White Supremacy: in this context, is the systematic marginalization of People of Colour based on a socially constructed racial hierarchy that privileges people who identify as white. It does not refer to extremist ideologies which believe that white people are genetically or culturally superior to non-whites.

POLICY

All members of the school community have the right to learn and work in an environment free of discrimination and racism. This right is guaranteed under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, *Alberta Human Rights Act* and *Education Act*. The Board confirms its commitment and role in achieving racism-free Division schools and recognizes that working toward this vision is for the benefit of all students, staff and the community at large.

The Board acknowledges that racism exists and the important role of public education in reflecting, influencing and driving positive systemic change. Racism can be perpetuated at the individual, institutional and systemic level and is rooted in historical oppression, white supremacy and colonialism. Proactive action is required to create anti-racist environments. The Board further acknowledges that individuals experiencing racism at any level encounter barriers to positive relationships, learning, academic success, personal fulfilment and well-being. The Board recognizes the complexity of how racism is experienced by students and commits to addressing incidents of racism through responsive and transparent processes.

The Board acknowledges that anti-racism and equity require continuous action, learning and improvement. The Board commits to using evidence and data to better understand issues of racism and equity in Edmonton Public Schools, to inform decision-making and action and to monitor progress and outcomes of this ongoing work.

The diversity of the students, staff and families of Edmonton Public Schools is a strength. The Board recognizes that respect for diverse cultural perspectives, traditions, languages, beliefs and values enriches the learning and working environment for everyone and is important to student well-being and personal growth. The Board is committed to honouring cultural diversity, promoting intercultural understanding to enable reflection and growth and fostering a sense of belonging. The Board is committed to supporting systemic change and acknowledges that empathy, compassion and learning are critical for achieving anti-racism and equity.

A. ANTI-RACISM AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Board recognizes that racism exists in our schools, the education system and the broader community and that the efforts to eradicate racism, discrimination and privilege from our learning and working environments is an ongoing and collective responsibility. The Board commits to this through:

1. Developing processes and resources that enable safe reporting of incidents and healthy relationships to strengthen open, respectful and restorative dialogue supportive of an environment of anti-racism, compassion and empathy.
2. Providing professional development and capacity building for Division staff to better understand their responsibility to address racism when it occurs and their role in preventing and mitigating biases and barriers caused by racism and discrimination that affect students, staff and families in the school system.
3. Continuously and meaningfully engaging with members of the community who have experienced systemic and institutional racism and marginalization to help inform the Division's deliberate efforts to eradicate racism and discrimination within the school system.

B. EQUITY AND INCLUSION

The Board understands that a sense of belonging for students and staff enriches the learning environment for all students. The Board commits to equity and inclusion through:

1. Establishing and implementing an anti-racist environment that reflects the cultural diversity of the school and broader community and that is responsive to students' life experiences and cultural backgrounds.
2. Supporting staff through professional development that is focused on helping staff understand the diversity within their school and broader community and their responsibility to respect cultural diversity and promote intercultural understanding.
3. Actively establishing and maintaining community relationships that reflect the diversity of the school and broader community.

C. STUDENT SUCCESS AND ACHIEVEMENT

The Board believes that every student can reach their full potential, and acknowledges that respect for, and responsiveness to, students' lived experience, culture and language is fundamental to their success. Deliberate and strategic efforts are required to ensure the success and achievement for all students. The Board commits to this through:

1. Supporting an environment where students' diverse histories, identities and lived experiences are valued and recognized as part of their success, engagement and belonging in schools.
2. Building staff capacity to review, identify and use resources and materials that represent the cultural diversity of the community.
3. Engaging with staff, family, educational institutions, community members and cultural groups to support student success and provide culturally meaningful opportunities to learn in a way that brings unique voices and lived experiences to the curriculum and their learning.

EXPECTATIONS

The Superintendent of Schools will implement this policy by assigning roles and responsibilities and developing administrative regulations, processes and best practices, including processes for safe reporting of incidents of racism.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Superintendent will provide an annual update to the Board around progress made in support of student success and achievement within a welcoming, inclusive, safe and healthy environment.

The Division will identify goals and strategies that support the diversity of our school communities, including English Language Learners, through the Three-Year Education Plan and will provide an annual update on progress and priority strategies through the Annual Education Results Report to Alberta Education.

REFERENCES

ACB.BP National Anthem and Flag
FA.BP Human Resources Framework
FBCA.AR Respectful Working Environments
GI.AR Teaching and Learning Resources
GGAB.AR Multicultural Education
HAA.BP First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education
HEGD.AR Exemption of Pupil from Instruction on Religious Grounds
HF.BP Safe, Caring and Respectful Learning Environments
Teaching Quality Standard
Leadership Quality Standard