

**JAMES BAY LOWLANDS  
SECONDARY SCHOOL BOARD**

**BOARD GOVERNANCE POLICY  
NO. GOV-13**

Date Adopted	October 24, 2018
Last Revised	
Board Motion	5598-10-18

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## EQUITY AND INCLUSION

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### 1. PURPOSE

This policy of the James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board is intended to support the values of the Board that all persons are entitled to learn and work in an environment that promotes human rights and equity of opportunity, free from discrimination and harassment. It supports Ministry of Education expectations that school boards have in place and sustain programs, procedures, and practices which reflect the principles of equity and inclusive education in eight specific areas of focus.

### 2. DEFINITIONS

**Equity:** Equity is the provision of opportunities for equality, ensuring that personal or social circumstances are not an obstacle to achieving potential. Equity of treatment is not the same as equal treatment because it includes acknowledging historical and present discrimination against identified groups and removing barriers, eliminating discrimination, and remedying the impact of past discrimination.

**Discrimination:** Discrimination is differential treatment which negatively affects the status of a person based upon a prohibited ground under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

**Harassment:** Harassment is defined in the *Ontario Human Rights Code* as "engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome".

**Prohibited Grounds:** The *Ontario Human Rights Code* defines prohibited grounds as: race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed (religion), sex (includes gender identify and pregnancy), sexual orientation, age, record of offences, marital status, family status, and/or disability (includes perceived disability).

### 3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

3.1 The James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board is committed to the principles of equity through inclusive programs, curriculum, services, and operations in accordance with the *Education Act*, *Ontario Human Rights Code*, and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

- 3.2 The Board is committed to promoting equity of opportunity and equity of access to the full range of programs, the delivery of services, and the resources that are critical to the achievement of successful educational and social outcomes for those served by the school system as well as those who serve the system.
- 3.3 The Board values the contribution of all members of its diverse community of students, staff, parents, and community members.

#### 4. **POLICY**

- 4.1 This policy affirms the responsibility of the James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board to provide a protected learning and working environment that is supportive of the dignity, self-esteem, and fair treatment of everyone taking part in Board activities.
- 4.2 The Board's policies, procedures, and practices will be developed, implemented, and continually evaluated to ensure fair and equitable educational, social, and employment opportunities for students, staff, and community partners.
- 4.3 The Board's goal is to enable each and every student to learn effectively, to reduce achievement gaps, and to improve learning outcomes for all, regardless of historical forms of marginalization as set out in the prohibited grounds of the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.
- 4.4 The Board upholds the principles of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which are confirmed in the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. The Board and its staff are also committed to the elimination of all types of discrimination as outlined in the Ontario Ministry of Education Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and in Ministry Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119: Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools.
- 4.5 The Board will identify and remove systemic and attitudinal barriers and biases to learning and employment opportunities that have a discriminatory effect on any individual.

### **BOARD EXPECTATIONS**

#### 5. **AREAS OF POLICY FOCUS**

In order to achieve the goals of equity and inclusive education, Policy and Procedures Memorandum (PPM) 119 specifies eight areas of focus to guide implementation of the equity and inclusive policy in each school board. These areas of focus are as follows:

- 1) Policies, Programs, Guidelines, and Practices
- 2) Shared and Committed Leadership
- 3) School Community Relationships
- 4) Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment Practices
- 5) Religious Accommodation

- 6) School and Board Climate and Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment
- 7) Professional Learning
- 8) Accountability and Transparency

## 5.1 Policies, Programs, Guidelines, and Practices

- 5.1.1 The Board serves students, the staff, and families in diverse communities by incorporating the principles of equity and inclusive education into all aspects of its operations, structures, policies, procedures, programs, guidelines, and practices.
- 5.1.2 The Board will ensure that its policy review cycle will result in the alignment and integration of the requirements of the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and PPM No. 119 in all documents. Respect for the diverse perspectives of the entire school community will be reflected in all areas of the teaching, learning, and administrative culture.
- 5.1.3 The Board will collect information needed to monitor the effects of the implementation of this Equity and Inclusion policy.

## 5.2 Shared and Committed Leadership

- 5.2.1 The Board supports all stakeholders in joining together to implement institutional practices and behaviours that cultivate equity and inclusive education.
- 5.2.2 The Board provides informed leadership to improve student achievement and to close achievement gaps for students by endeavouring to identify, address, and remove all forms of discrimination consistent with the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.
- 5.2.3 The Board establishes and maintains collaborative relationships with diverse communities so that the perspectives and experiences of all students are recognized to help meet their needs.
- 5.2.4 The Board provides training to students, the staff, and trustees in implementing equity and inclusive education and leadership initiatives.

## 5.3 School Community Relationships

- 5.3.1 The Board establishes and maintains partnerships with diverse communities so that the perspectives and experiences of all students, families, and staff members are recognized and their needs are met.
- 5.3.2 The Board values the assets that all stakeholders can bring to enable each and every student to learn effectively and enhance educational opportunities for all.
- 5.3.3 The Board will use tools such as a school climate survey to determine the views of stakeholders about the school environment, and will act upon relevant next steps.

**5.4 Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment Practices**

- 5.4.1 Curriculum resources, instruction, and assessment and evaluation practices are inclusive and reviewed in order to identify and address discriminatory biases so that each student may maximize his or her learning potential.
- 5.4.2 The Board will provide an inclusive curriculum that seeks to recognize and affirm the life experiences of all students, both in its content and methodology.
- 5.4.3 Multiple opportunities for assessment allow for student learning and precision of instruction. Effective evaluation includes researched best practices that truly reflect the current level of achievement of the student.
- 5.4.4 The Board will ensure that learning resources and instructional strategies show people of different races, genders, and ages in non-stereotypical settings, occupations, and activities. The curriculum will explore the contributions of all peoples in Canada.

**5.5 Religious Accommodation**

- 5.5.1 The Board acknowledges each individual's right to follow or not follow religious beliefs and practices, free from discriminatory or harassing behaviour, and is committed to taking all reasonable steps to provide religious accommodation to students and staff.
- 5.5.2 While the Board and its staff will take all reasonable steps to ensure freedom of religion and religious practices, it is expected that students and their families will help the Board understand their religious needs and will work with the Board to determine appropriate and reasonable accommodations.
- 5.5.3 Board Policy GOV-16 Religious Accommodation sets out Board expectations for religious accommodation.

**5.6 School Climate and the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment**

- 5.6.1 The Board welcomes all stakeholders and encourages active participation of parents, students, and staff in ensuring that the principles of the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the Ministry's equity strategy are applied. A respectful school climate includes the active participation of underrepresented peoples as valued participants.
- 5.6.2 The Board is committed to the principle that every person within the school community is entitled to a respectful, positive school climate and learning environment, free from all forms of discrimination and harassment.
- 5.6.3 Board administrative procedures work towards the eradication of discrimination and harassment by ensuring that all members of the school community are aware of a timely and measured response to claims of discrimination of any kind.
- 5.6.4 The Board will use progressive discipline practices for students, which may include peer mediation and restorative justice.

## 5.7 Professional Learning

- 5.7.1 Professional learning opportunities will be provided to staff and students to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours needed to identify and eliminate discriminatory biases and systemic barriers under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.
- 5.7.2 Ongoing professional learning is the groundwork for positive changes in schools. Professional learning must ensure that all voices are represented.
- 5.7.3 The Board will promote collaboration among staff to select and implement best practices in equity and inclusive education.

## 5.8 Accountability and Transparency

- 5.8.1 The Board acknowledges and assumes its responsibility to report on its goals and progress in implementation of the equity strategy.
- 5.8.2 The implementation of equity and inclusive education is assessed and monitored and these results are communicated to the community.
- 5.8.3 The Board will engage the staff and school in school improvement planning with specific emphasis on removing barriers to student achievement.

## REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

### **Legal:**

*Education Act, Paragraph 8 (1) 29.1 Need for Board Equity and Inclusion Policy*  
*Education Act, Section 169.1 Board Powers and Duties: Positive School Climate*  
*Education Act: Subsection 283 (2) Chief Executive Officer*  
*Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*  
*Ontario Human Rights Code*  
*The Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*  
*Occupational Health and Safety Act*  
*Ontarians with Disabilities Act*  
*Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005*  
*Ontario Building Code*  
Ontario Regulation 298, Sections 28-29 Religion in Schools  
Ontario Ministry of Education. (2009) Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy  
Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation  
Policy/Program Memorandum No. 108 Opening or Closing Exercises  
Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools. Revised 2013

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 128 The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 144 Bullying Prevention and Intervention

***Board References:***

Board Policy GOV-01 Values, Vision, and Mission

Board Policy GOV-02 Role of the Corporate Board

Board Policy GOV-03 Role of the Supervisory Officer

Board Policy GOV-05 Multi-Year Strategic Plan

Board Policy GOV-06 Policy Development and Review

Board Policy GOV-08 Staff Recruitment and Selection

Board Policy GOV-09 Board Communications

Board Policy GOV-11 Board Code of Conduct

Board Policy GOV-14 Indigenous Education

Board Policy GOV-15 Accessibility Standards

Board Policy GOV-16 Religious Accommodation

Board Policy GOV-17 Safe Space: Sexual Orientation