



Anti-Oppression Strategy

Land Acknowledgement

The Durham District School Board acknowledges that many Indigenous Nations have long standing relationships, both historic and modern, with the territories upon which our school board and schools are located. Today this area is home to many Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island. We acknowledge that the Durham Region forms a part of the traditional and treaty territory of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, The Mississauga Peoples and the treaty territory of the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation. It is on these ancestral treaty lands that we teach, learn and live.

This statement was co-created in partnership with the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation and the Chippewas of Georgina Island.

Indigenous Rights Statement

The Durham District School Board recognizes Indigenous rights are distinct. In the exercise of those rights, Indigenous staff and students shall not be subjected to actions with the aim or effect of depriving these distinct rights.

Human Rights Statement

The Durham District School Board is committed to providing learning and working environments that centre human rights and equity and are safe, welcoming, respectful, equitable, accessible, inclusive and free from all forms of discrimination, oppression, harassment and harm.

Introduction

The DDSB Anti-Oppression Strategy defines a pathway that the Durham District School Board will take to ensure that we reaffirm our commitment to dismantling racism and discrimination of all forms. The Strategy centres students by igniting Learning, Connections, and Well-Being through an anti-oppressive approach and aligns with the guiding principles of our multi-year strategic plan.

The principles ensure that we acknowledge and shift power imbalances to disrupt and dismantle oppressive structures with the goal of ensuring all students and staff **are treated with dignity and respect and reach their full potential every year.**

The impact of the **DDSB's Anti-Oppression strategy** will be measured through the implementation of the multi year strategic plans.



Indigenous Education Policy

The purpose of the Indigenous Education Policy is to protect and uphold Indigenous and Inherent Rights, to deepen our systemic commitment to Reconciliation, to identify, prevent, address and eliminate anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination, and to ensure consultation with the Indigenous Education Department.

This policy is informed by UNDRIP and is informed by and compliant with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Ontario Education Act, the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Anti-Racism Directorate's Data Standards and the DDSB's Guidelines and Procedures for the Accommodation of Creed in Schools: An Inclusive Approach.

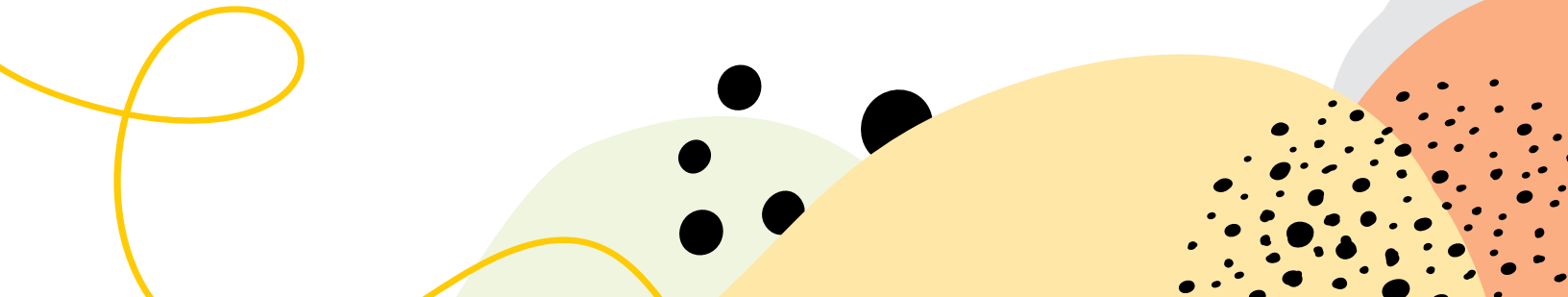
DDSB Human Rights Anti-Discrimination & Anti-Racism Policy

The objective of this procedure is to implement the Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Anti Racism Policy (the "Human Rights Policy"), with a focus on proactive actions to promote, protect and uphold human rights and to identify, prevent and address all forms of discrimination in the Durham District School Board's (the "District") services, employment, and learning and working environments.

1.2 As set out in the Human Rights Policy, "discrimination" means all forms of individual, intersectional and system discrimination based on any of the Prohibited Grounds as defined in the Human Rights Policy. Consistent with the Human Rights Policy, there is no hierarchy of rights. This procedure applies equally to all Prohibited Grounds and intersection of grounds and to all forms of discrimination, including (and not limited to) racism, ableism, sexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, faithism and classism.

The considerations in this strategy are aligned with the Human Rights Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Procedure and the Human Right Accountability framework for school based staff, please refer to the following subsections:

- [3.13 Individual Reflection and Action to 3.19 Classrooms, Schools and Learning Environments](#)
- [Appendix A of the Human Rights Accountability Framework](#)



Human Rights Prohibited Grounds for Discrimination 3.5

This policy prohibits discrimination and harassment by DDSB community members in the delivery of services, in employment and in DDSB learning and working environments based on the following prohibited grounds (“Prohibited Grounds”):

- **Age**
- **Ancestry** (includes Indigenous ancestry)
- **Citizenship**
- **Colour**
- **Creed** (religion, includes Indigenous spiritual practices)
- **Various abilities, disabilities, and neurodiversity*** (includes mental, physical, developmental and learning disabilities and addictions)
- **Ethnic origin**
- **Family status** (being in a parent-child or equivalent relationship)
- **Gender identity** (which may be the same or different from a person’s birth assigned sex)
- **Gender expression** (how a person publicly presents their gender)
- **Marital status** (the status of being married, single, widowed, divorced or separated and includes “common-law relationships”)
- **Place of origin**
- **Race**
- **Record of offenses** (in employment only)
- **Sex** (includes pregnancy)
- **Sexual orientation**
- **Socioeconomic status** (for students in DDSB services and learning environments).

** Under the human rights code the prohibited ground is disability.*



Who are we?

We live and learn on Indigenous land.

We live in apartments, hotels, shelters, foster homes, group homes and houses.

We are artists, scientists, athletes, linguists, and mathematicians.

We are leaders, makers, influencers, and thinkers.

We are all learners and teachers in our own unique ways and roles.

We teach, learn and work in schools, in the education centre, at home and in communities.

When we work, learn, and lead together, we appreciate each other.

We make space for each other and thrive in community.

We are connected through care, mutual respect, and support.

We represent many ancestries, generations, ethnicities, abilities, ways of living, loving and worship.

We are newcomers, settlers or have lived here since time immemorial.

We have individual and shared responsibilities and know that we are all important.

We define individual paths toward greatness, while we pursue learning, wellness, growth, and change.

We communicate through many languages, through sign, touch, words, pictures and in silence.

We make mistakes.

We embrace our potential and take responsibility for who we are becoming.

Being of service to others is central to our identities.

We are all this and more.

We are the **DDSB**.



How do we show up?

Students come to school each day with dreams, aspirations, fears, anxieties, joy, hurt and many other layers to their identities. Some things can be easily seen, while other aspects require a deeper look.

Students show up to be accepted, seen, heard, treated with dignity, respect, and to be loved and recognized for who they are, and not for who we think they should be. They show up to learn and thrive in school communities where they have a say in decisions that affect them. They show up seeking to make meaningful connections and to be in spaces where they are physically and emotionally safe.

How do we show up? Do our faces light up when we see all students, before or after the bell? Do we take pride in their successes as well as take accountability when success hasn't happened, yet?

Do we show up ready to honour their unique and diverse gifts? Do we show up allowing for students to dream big, then bigger? Do we show up by letting them know that we truly see who they are? Do we show up to let students know we care about and want to learn with them, and for them? Do we show up to get to know their stories? Do we show up prepared to let students lead? Do we show up and let students know that the things that matter to them, matter to us? **How do we show up?**

How do we show up? Do we recognize the genius in all that students do? Do we show up for our students when they are not around? Do we show up when it's hard to show up? Do we show up for students even when we assume they are not showing up for us? Do we honour their abilities by understanding how they learn best? Do we pay attention to what helps and also to what hurts? Do we place our students at the heart of what we do? Do we understand the power and impact we have when we show up for our students?

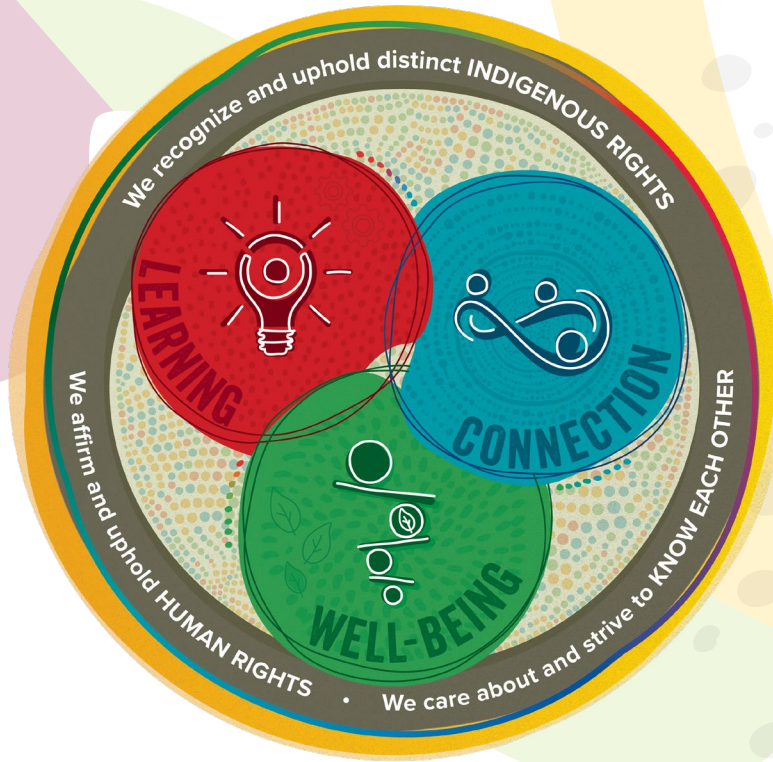


How do we serve?

Anti-Oppression Strategic Priorities



Multi-Year Strategic Plan



We will promote

Meaningful Learning by:

- Providing high quality teaching and learning for every student and staff member
- Centering students and matching educational experiences to their interests and goals to prepare them for a changing world
- Recognizing and supporting staff as professionals and collaborators

We will promote

Connected Communities by:

- Engaging students, families, staff, and community members as valued contributors to our growing community
- Building trust and a shared purpose through listening, communication, and action
- Fostering opportunities to meet, learn from, and inspire each other

We will promote **Well-Being** by:

- Creating safe, caring, and respectful environments where people can thrive
- Supporting the physical and mental health of students and staff
- Honouring every individual's identity and inherent dignity

The *Ignite Learning Multi-Year Strategic Plan* sets the direction for the work of the DDSB and guides our collective actions for ongoing student-centered improvement and success.

Guiding Principles

The DDSB's Guiding Principles are rooted in anti-oppression, equity and our responsibilities to uphold Indigenous rights and human rights for everyone. By truly knowing each other, we can better understand the unique experiences and perspectives that enrich our communities. We are building our strategic directions on these principles so that everyone is treated with dignity and respect and knows that they belong here. These guiding principles help create environments where students, staff and families will flourish through meaningful learning, connected communities, and personal and collective well-being.

- We recognize and uphold distinct
INDIGENOUS RIGHTS
- We affirm and uphold
HUMAN RIGHTS
- We care about and strive
to **KNOW EACH OTHER**

These Guiding Principles underpin and shape our work and learning together as the DDSB community.



Student Rights

- To be treated with dignity and respect
- To be free from all forms of discrimination and hate
- To learn in inclusive, accessible and equitable spaces
- To have a say in decisions that affect them

Duty Bearer Responsibilities

Promote Human Rights

- **Promote** and **Protect** human rights (including **students' rights** and the best interests of the child; centre **dignity** and **respect** and **do no harm**)
- Give rights holders **information about their rights** and **responsibilities**

Prevent Discrimination

- **Identify, prevent and address human rights barriers and harm** in schools/classrooms, teaching and learning, workplaces and operational, employment and corporate policies, procedures, processes, practices, etc. (design inclusively and do not discriminate)

Respond to Barriers

- **Respond to and address barriers and issues** that rights holders experience
- **Accommodate** human rights related needs

Learn and Build Capacity

- **Learn** about human rights and provide duty bearers with **knowledge, skills, learning and resources** about our responsibilities and how to **apply** human rights principles in our day-to-day jobs

Correct Discrimination

- Address human rights issues and complaints (don't ignore, condone or continue discrimination)
- **Correct** discrimination when it happens



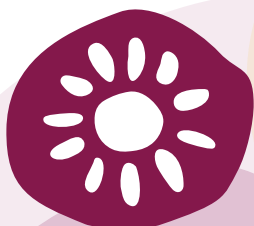
Anti-Oppression Strategic Priorities



**Cultivate
safe learning
and working
environments**



**Foster
Meaningful
Connections**



**Represent,
Affirm and
Recognize
all Identities**

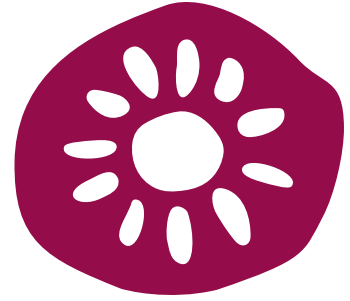
**Create
Accessible
Learning
Opportunities**



**Support Mental
Health and
Well-Being**



Represent, Affirm and Recognize all Identities through meaningful and reflective learning opportunities



Create spaces where students see themselves represented in meaningful and positive ways.

- ☀ Integrate Culturally Relevant and authentic practices in the classroom and school wide.
- ☀ Acknowledge and Recognize all identities and lived experiences within the learning environment.
- ☀ Maintain high expectations for all students.

Considerations

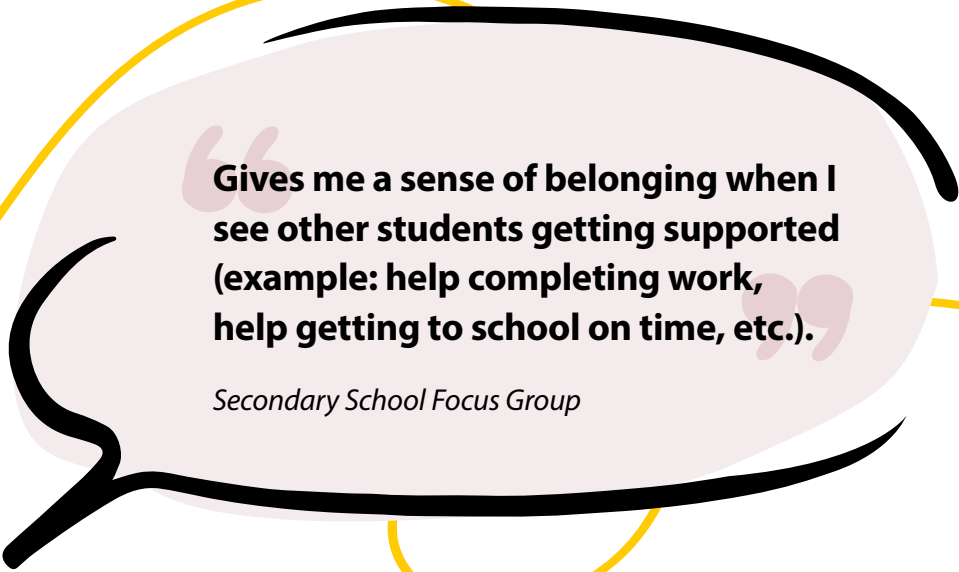
- How do learning spaces incorporate opportunities for intersectional identities to be represented?
- How will we effectively integrate the voices, choices, abilities and experiences of our students into our school programming?
- How will we be responsive to the strengths, interests, gifts, and lived realities of our students as we create and design our schools and classrooms?
- How are we creating working and learning spaces using a Universal for Design for Learning approach?

It feels like things are performative and things are done just to check them off a list.

2SLGBTQI+ Focus Group

Cultivate safe and identify affirming learning spaces where all students feel they belong.

- ☀ Create safety through intentionally building trust with the students, families/guardians, and all community partners of all identities .
- ☀ Include multiple representations of community while also affirming joy and excellence.
- ☀ Provide multilingual learning spaces and position all dialects and home languages as assets to be used regularly in the classroom.



Gives me a sense of belonging when I see other students getting supported (example: help completing work, help getting to school on time, etc.).

Secondary School Focus Group

Considerations

- Why might students and their families not feel comfortable sharing?
Are there systemic barriers that contribute to the sense of belonging, safety, and/or trust with the school/classrooms?
- How do we recognize whose voices are absent, and what actions do we take to address the absence of those voices?

Cultivate safe learning and working environments that Centre Joy and Intentionally Disrupt Oppression



Create safe and joyful learning and working environments

- 🌞 Engage community, staff, and students voice to develop meaningful and engaging learning opportunities for all identities.
- 🌞 Engage students, staff and families to build positive relationships that create connections by striving to know each other and center individual identities/lived experiences.
- 🌞 Establish feedback mechanisms that empower individuals to share their ideas, concerns, and aspirations for creating a more joyful and inclusive environment.

Considerations

- For whom are the learning and working environments safe for?
- How are you engaging the community, staff, and students about centring joy?
- How might you regularly collect feedback that honours the voice of all groups? (street data)*
- How are we upholding our Duty Bearer Responsibilities daily?
How are we applying them to our decisions and actions?

“Something that would improve my school experience are less expensive ways to participate in school events.”

Student Focus Group

* Street, Devin. *Street Data: A Guide to Understanding Equity in Schools*. Corwin, 2022..

Create safe working and learning environments by intentionally disrupting oppression.

- 🗣️ Provide learning opportunities to recognize, and intentionally disrupt oppressive practices.
- 🗣️ Engage in conversations with staff, students, families and community about promoting Indigenous and human rights.
- 🗣️ Cultivate spaces for marginalized individuals to share, contribute, lead and to be heard.

What's important to me is supporting our students' identities in every way. Intersectionality as living beings with many strengths. How can the DDSB embed that with everything we do?

Community Focus Group

Considerations

- How is the new learning about disrupting/interrupting oppression being applied in the school community?
- How are we providing opportunities for the team to learn about bias, power and privilege?
- Whose voices are involved in making decisions?
- How are we building inclusive communities?

Foster Meaningful Connections for All Identities



Cultivate learning environments that foster meaningful connections and learning for all identities and are safe welcoming, respectful, equitable and free from discrimination, racism and harm

- ⚙️ **Provide meaningful learning opportunities for students that are identity affirming and embedded in the context of cross curricular and integrated learning that goes beyond the learning that occurs during days or months of recognition.**
- ⚙️ **Develop critical consciousness among students, staff and community when implementing practices that centre identity and contribute to a positive school climate by fostering connectivity and promoting wellness for all.**
- ⚙️ **Engage community partners, leaders and caregivers to leverage diverse perspectives, narratives, and knowledge systems through collaborative planning of school based events that foster joy and promote connection.**

“There is more to life than the grades on report cards. Go beyond the academic curriculum - connect as people first.”

Student Senate Focus Group

Considerations

- How have you engaged student and community voices in thinking through what holidays, events and days of recognition could look like for your school community?
- What steps have you taken to ensure that events are centred around the curriculum connections?
- How is Universal Design for Learning a part of the planning, to ensure all are engaged in accessible and meaningful activities?

Nurture meaningful and trusting relationships where all students, staff and community strive to know each other.

- ⚙ Engage all school community partners to strive to listen and learn about one another, with curiosity in a way that is meaningful and that fosters mutual respect and appreciation for all intersectional identities.
- ⚙ Facilitate students, staff and community intentionally and explicitly have critical conversations about identity and oppression in a way that fosters deeper understanding and strengthens relationships.
- ⚙ Through meaningful and developmentally appropriate teaching we will name, respond and correct, when slurs and epithets are used, to prevent racism, discrimination and harm.

Considerations

- How do I co-create a positive classroom climate and culture to engage students in critical conversations?
- How do I co-create norms and practices that cultivate brave spaces?
- Who are the students, staff and community members that I serve or work with? How am I acknowledging their identity and experiences?
- What do I know and not know about staff, students and their families? Have I considered why I don't know?
- How am I responding to student inquiries? Have I considered the full narrative to the student inquiry?
- How are we creating opportunities for learning about global identities and intersectionality of identity?
- Are we including and valuing parents and caregivers as community partners?

“Educating people on the language: People don’t know what’s okay and not okay to say

2SLGBTQI+Focus Group

Support Mental Health and Well-being of all Staff and Students



Create an inclusive environment that acknowledges and promotes mental health and well-being and is responsive to the intersectional identities of all.

- 🌱 Use authentic voices to inform the creation of engaging learning opportunities around intersectionality as it impacts the mental health and well-being of students.
- 🌱 Work alongside caregivers and community to inform mental health and wellbeing supports for all intersectional identities.
- 🌱 Understand and be responsive to the mental health and well-being needs of marginalized identities through an anti-oppressive approach.

Considerations

- How can we empower students to recognize their own mental health and well-being needs and advocate to access the supports available?
- How can we co-create ongoing opportunities where the school, caregiver, and community voice is leveraged to inform mental health and well-being supports for students and families?
- How can we engage staff in critically conscious professional development to promote an understanding of a positive sense of self with an intersectional identity lens?

“If you’re going to help kids with their education, then help them long-term – not just with education – but look for signs of other issues and problems. Don’t tell them they are exaggerating and acting out for attention.”

Secondary School Focus Group

Provide access to spaces that center the mental health and well-being of all intersectional identities.

- Create spaces that center all voices where opportunities are provided to foster discussions related to mental health and well-being.
- Develop partnerships that intentionally connect with identity affirming community agencies.
- Build an understanding of the importance of identity affirming spaces for all staff, students and school community.

Considerations

- How can I co-create spaces with students that are reflective and responsive to intersectional identities?
- How can I host opportunities for students and families to connect with community organizations for mental health and well-being support?
- How can I humanize the learning environment for staff?
- How can I work alongside my school team to proactively create spaces where issues that are important to my students are discussed?
- How can I intentionally connect with the intersectional identities of students?

The Cypher made me feel comforted, empowered, secure and aware. It made me feel confident and represented as a Black person.

Cypher feedback

Create Accessible Learning Opportunities by Identifying and Eliminating Barriers for all identities



Provide accessible and engaging working and learning environments for all identities.

- ☞ Plan classroom, school based and community events and activities using Universal Design for Learning.
- ☞ Ensure students, staff and community will be made aware of, and offered accommodations as per their needs.
- ☞ Identify and remove barriers that limit access and success for all staff, student and community identities

Considerations

- How might we include identities and abilities from an asset based lens?
- How does the learning environment reflect the students we serve and their lived experiences?
- How are barriers being identified, addressed and prevented?

Engage diverse staff, student and community voices informing school and system based decisions that affect them.

- ☞ Ensure the classroom/school environment, resources and programming reflect the identities and abilities of all.
- ☞ Use authentic student, staff and community voices to create engaging and accessible learning opportunities and experiences.
- ☞ Ensure all students have equitable access to the curriculum and to demonstrate their learning in multiple ways (UDL).

...when students don't fit into the 'norms' of society they often get teased or bullied. If educators could talk more about 'uncomfortable topics' racism, gender, sexism, etc. then we can better navigate them.

Secondary School Focus Group

Considerations

- How are using/aligning funding and resources to create accessible spaces?
- How might we share removal of barriers for schools/boards so all can learn from it?

Data Collection Considerations

One of the Guiding Principles of the DDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan is: “We care about and strive to know one another”. It is important that we take the time to get to know who we serve and with whom we work. Before collecting any data, please consider the following:

What do you already know?

- Review and learn from the existing school data
- School Climate and Student Well-Being Survey
- Past surveys
- Focus groups or feedback processes your school or department may have engaged in
- Consult with Research and Accountability Development if you think you need further data
- Workforce census and Employee experience data

How will you use the data?

- What is the data telling you?
- What will you do with this learning?
- How will the data be used to move forward the anti-oppression strategy priorities?

Are you aware of the responsibilities related to gathering the identity data?

- There are 43 data standards associated with the collection of identity data, as part of the Anti-Racism Act. Not only are questions to be asked in certain ways and in certain orders, there are responsibilities for issues such as how the data is stored, who has access, and how the information is used.

When intentionally collecting data be prepared to take action based on what you have learned. Data collections must be directly linked and connected to actions and decision making you will take moving forward.



Terms & Definitions

Anti-Oppression: An approach that recognizes the power imbalance within society that attributes benefits to some groups and excludes others. This approach seeks to develop strategies to create an environment free from oppression, racism and other forms of discrimination. It acknowledges the intersections of identity and Human Rights Code grounds and aims to promote equity between various identities.

Anti-racism: an active and consistent process of change to eliminate individual, institutional and systemic racism as well as the oppression and injustice racism causes. An anti-racism approach is a systematic method of analysis, and a proactive course of action rooted in the recognition of the existence of racism, including systemic racism. Anti-racism actively seeks to identify, remove, prevent, and mitigate racially inequitable outcomes and power imbalances between groups and change the structures that sustain inequities.

Critically Conscious: The ability to perceive social, political, and economic oppression and to take action against the oppressive elements of society (Freire, 1970). As defined in the work of Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) is educators helping “students to recognize, understand and critique current social inequities” (p.476)

Discrimination: any practice or behaviour, whether intentional or not, which results in a person or group experiencing differential or inequitable treatment (or where they are denied opportunities or benefits) based on one or more of the Prohibited Grounds of discrimination under the Human Rights Code and this policy (except where the conduct is permitted under the Human Rights Code). It is treating someone unfairly because of a Prohibited Ground(s) by imposing a burden or denying a privilege, benefit or opportunity enjoyed by others.

Indigenous Rights: derive from Indigenous peoples political, economic and social structures and from their cultures, spiritual traditions, histories and philosophies, especially their rights to their lands, territories and resources.

Intersectional discrimination/intersectionality: discrimination based on the overlap between or combination of two or more Human Rights Code related characteristics. Often it is the result of identities that intersect in a socially significant way. It refers to discrimination that occurs based on two or more Human Rights Code grounds that produces a unique and distinct form and experience of discrimination, and recognizes that people’s lives involve multiple overlapping identities, and that marginalization, exclusion and discrimination may be further exacerbated because of how these identities interact or “intersect”.

Neurodiversity: Neurodiversity is not a trait that any individual possesses or can possess. When an individual or group of individuals diverges from the dominant societal standards of “normal” neurocognitive functioning, they don’t “have neurodiversity,” they’re neurodivergent.” Dr. Nick Walker, Neuroqueer Heresies

Racism: a belief that one group is superior or inferior to others. Racism can be openly displayed in racial “jokes”, slurs or hate crimes. It can also be more deeply rooted in attitudes, values and stereotypical beliefs, and are assumptions that have evolved over time and have become part of systems and institutions. Racism includes ideas or practices that establish, maintain or perpetuate the racial superiority or dominance of one group over another.

Universal Design for Learning: a teaching approach that focuses on using teaching strategies or pedagogical materials designed to meet individual needs to enhance learning for all students.

Additional Terms are referenced in the Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Policy glossary of terms

Supporting Documentation

[ABR Resources](#)

[Considerations for School Based Events and Days of Recognition](#)

[Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Policy](#)

[Human Rights Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Procedure](#)

[Human Rights Roles and Responsibilities and Accountability Framework](#)

[Indigenous Education Policy](#)

[My Name](#)

[OHRC Right to Read](#)



Acknowledgement

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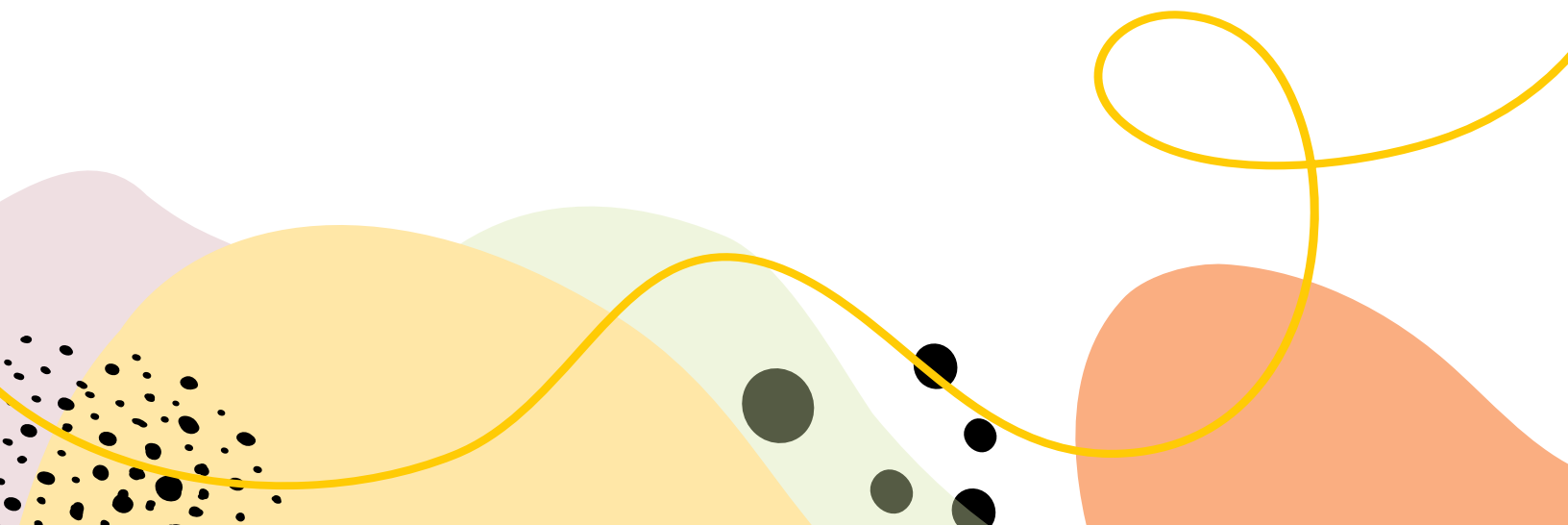
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Anti-Oppression Department

Anti-Oppression Strategy

Students learn how to develop and apply their language and literacy knowledge and skills in their daily lives and in cross-curricular and integrated learning contexts. As they explore the concepts of identity, self, and sense of belonging and the lived experiences of a diversity of individuals within various communities, including those in Canada, they can further develop an understanding of their own unique identities. By analyzing themes in texts of various forms from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit individuals, communities, groups, and nations, students can also develop their understanding of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit identities, perspectives, relationships, legacies, and ways of knowing, being, and doing.

Ontario Language Curriculum (2023)