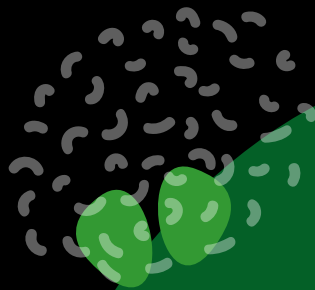




A Compendium of Action to Support 2SLGBTQIA+ Students, Staff and Families

Last modified December 2024



*Imagine if we measured success by the
amount of safety that people felt in
our presence.*

—Jonathan Louis Dent

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Land Acknowledgement

The Durham District School Board (DDSB) 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.



Purpose of the Compendium

The Durham District School Board (DDSB) 2SLGBTQIA+ Compendium of Action reaffirms our commitment to dismantling homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and discrimination. The compendium 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.

To uphold rights and safe and inclusive environments in schools and workplaces, all students and staff need to feel safe and included in DDSB schools and workspaces. This compendium is a guide and a tool to help staff, students, and community members reflect, learn, adjust, develop, and act to create and maintain safer spaces for 2SLGBTQIA+ students, staff, and community members.

The objective of this compendium is to reaffirm that all DDSB staff have duty bearer responsibilities to uphold Indigenous rights and human rights for all DDSB students, staff, and community members. We recognize this is a work in progress, and we are on a collective journey of listening, learning and action.



Message from Director

*"Equality means more than passing laws.
The struggle is really won in the hearts and minds
of the community where it really counts."*

—Barbara Gittings



The Durham District School Board has made a strong and clear commitment to creating the conditions for all students to reach their full potential, to find joy, to explore their talents and to author their own stories and chart their own paths.

We also recognize that students' ability to live authentically in the security of knowing that their identity is affirmed and embraced, is critical to their well-being, and by extension, to their success in school and in life. We know that members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community face obstacles that are marginalizing and harmful. We need to act to change this.

We are pleased to share this Compendium of Action to Support the 2SLGBTQIA+ student, staff, and families. This resource reflects our commitment to fostering inclusivity, respect, and understanding for individuals of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions.

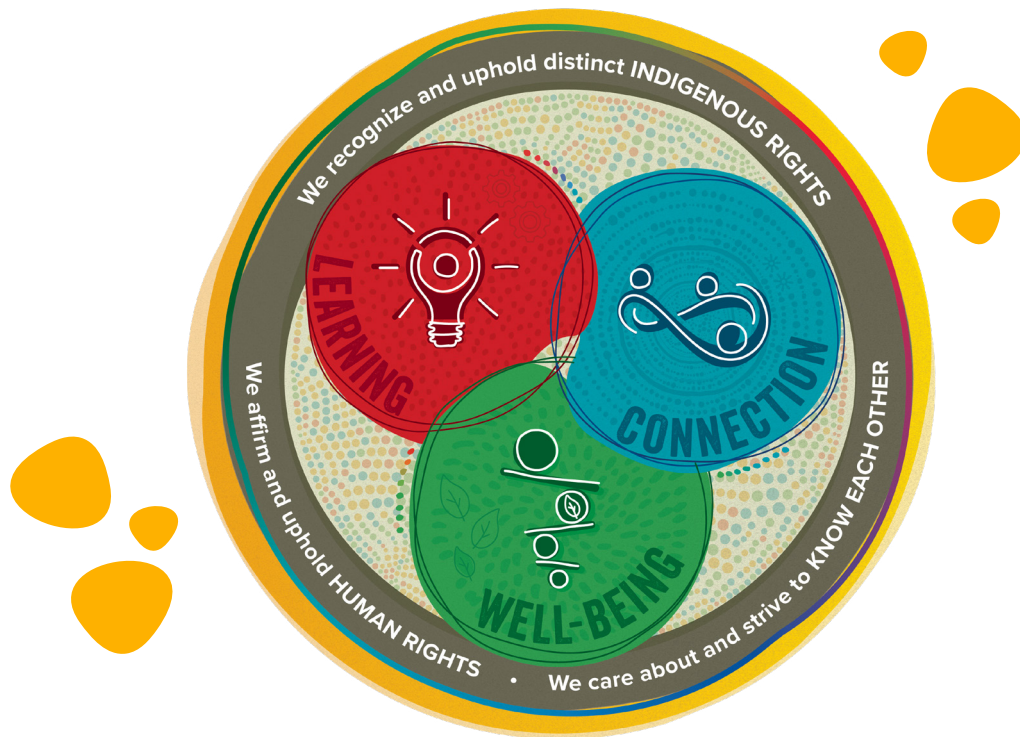
This compendium was designed with both knowledge and action in mind. It provides foundational insights into the experiences of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and offers practical steps that we all can take to create more inclusive, supportive environments, and uphold Indigenous Rights and Human Rights in our learning and working environments. By increasing our awareness and equipping ourselves with effective practices, we will address barriers, build a culture of allyship and demonstrate our commitment to our duty bearer responsibilities.

Our goal is not only to educate but to inspire action. We recognize that being an ally involves ongoing learning, listening, and acting on behalf of all members of our communities. Thank you for engaging with this resource and for your commitment to creating a more inclusive and respectful environment for everyone. Together, we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of those around us and in the broader community.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Camille Williams-Taylor'.

Camille Williams-Taylor
Director of Education

Durham District School Board 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 Durham District School Board's (DDSB) 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.



DDSB Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination, and Anti-Racism Policy, Procedure, and Accountability Framework

As set out in the DDSB's Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Policy (the "Human Rights Policy"), "discrimination" includes all forms of individual, intersectional and system discrimination based on any of the prohibited grounds outlined in the policy. There is no hierarchy of rights, and the policy 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 objective of the Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Procedure ("the procedure") is to implement 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 DDSB's services, employment, and learning and working environments.

In addition, the Human Rights Roles, Responsibilities, and Accountability Framework (the "accountability framework") outlines individual and organizational roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities for upholding human rights.

The commitments and actions in this Compendium align with the Human Rights policy, procedure, and accountability framework.

This Compendium should be read together with the commitment and requirements of the Human Rights policy, procedure, and accountability framework to support inclusive and respectful environments for everyone.



Human Rights Policy: Prohibited Grounds for Discrimination

The Human Rights 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:

- **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 Ontario Human Rights Code, the prohibited ground is "disability".*



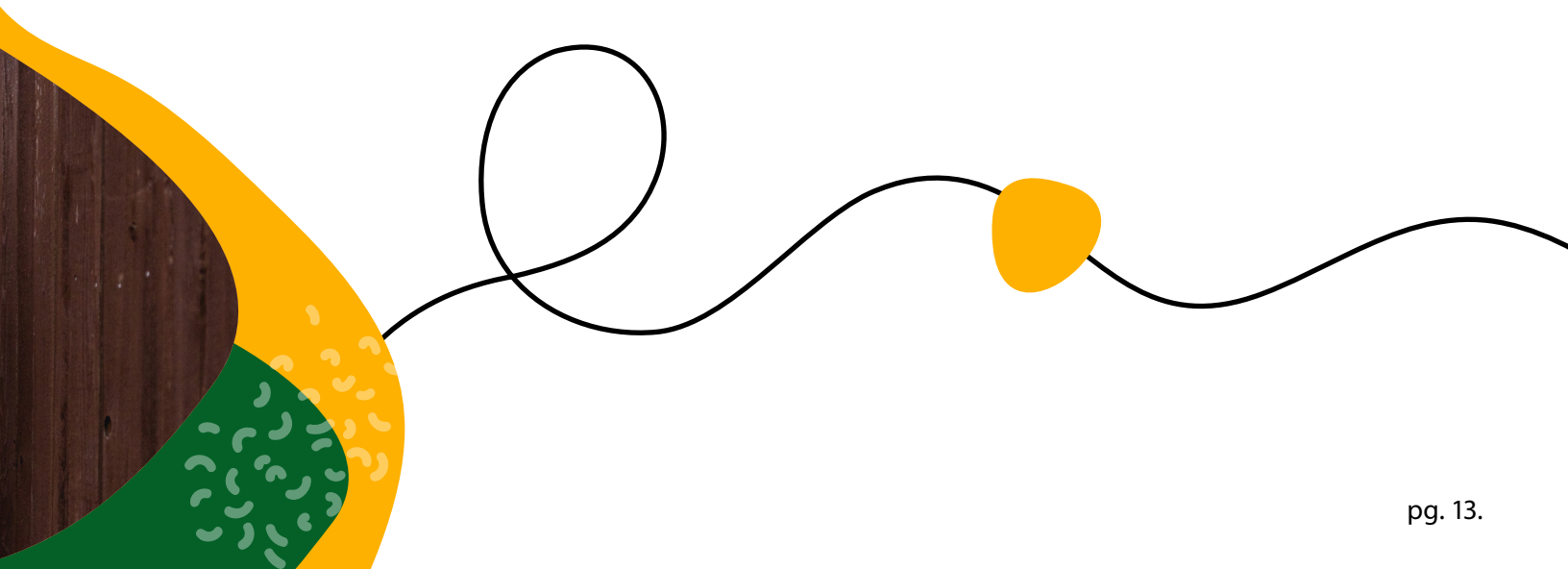
Who are we?

- 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?

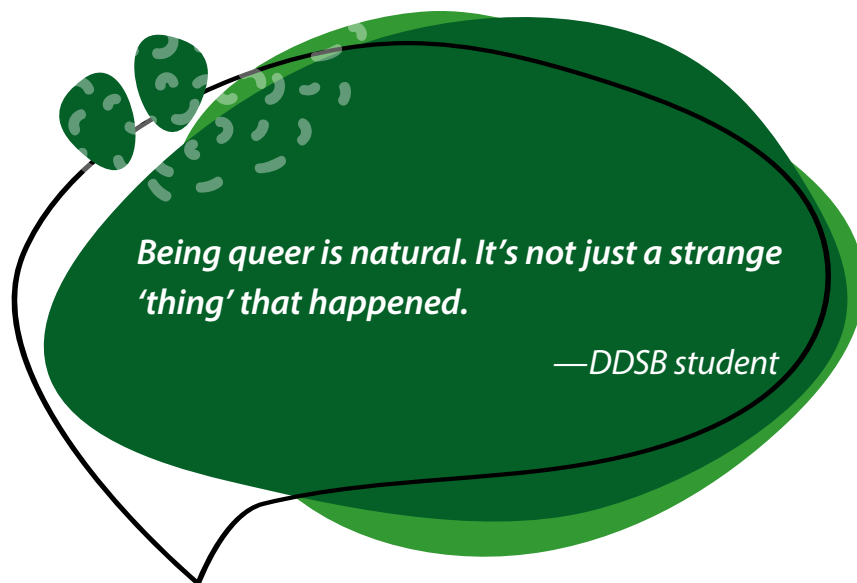
Anti-Oppression Strategic Priorities



2SLGBTQIA+ - What does it mean?

The acronym "2SLGBTQIA+" stands for **Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer** (or questioning), **intersex, asexual**. The plus sign represents other sexual and gender identities. It's important to remember that everyone has their own gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.

Intersectionality is a term coined by Kimberle Crenshaw to describe how all oppression is interconnected. Human lives cannot be explained by single identities or classifications, and the overlapping marginalizations one experiences create obstacles that arise from the interplay at the intersections. Multiple forms of inequity compound themselves creating unique personal experiences of discrimination. These obstacles are not always understood.





**DID
YOU
KNOW?!**

Findings from the second National Climate Survey on homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in Canadian schools reveal both optimism and concern. "The good news is that homophobic and transphobic language is somewhat in decline in the ten plus years since the first Climate Survey, with a similar trend found in regard to school-based experiences of verbal and physical harassment of 2SLGBTQ students.

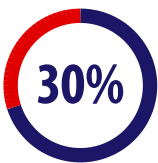
Despite these improvements, results from the second National Climate Survey suggest we are still a long way from eradication of school-based incidents of homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia."

(Still In Every Class, In Every School, Egale, 2021)



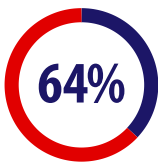
By the Numbers

The national data provides a window into the context that today's youth must cope through. Understanding these circumstances speaks to the importance of leaders and the broader community coming together to improve the environment as we look to improve outcomes. Consider the following:

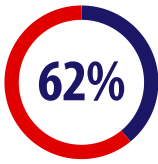


30% of LGBTQ employees in Canada report experiencing discrimination in the workplace compared to only 3% of non-LGBTQ employees

(Egale)



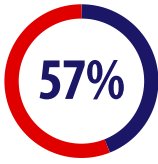
64% of all participants reported hearing homophobic comments daily or weekly at school



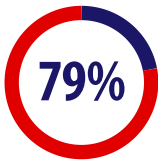
62% of 2SLGBTQ respondents feel unsafe at school, compared to 11% of cisgender heterosexual students



30% of 2SLGBTQ respondents had been the victims of cyberbullying, compared to 8% of cisgender heterosexual respondents



57% of trans respondents had been targets of mean rumours or lies



79% of trans students who had been the victims of physical harassment reported that teachers and staff were ineffective in addressing transphobic harassment

(From the Egale School Climate Survey, 2021)

2SLGBTQ Indigenous youth were more likely to report skipping school due to feeling unsafe and most likely overall to report experiencing verbal harassment. 2SLGBTQ Black students were most likely to be verbally harassed about their race and to indicate that they wished they attended a different school

(From the Egale "Still in Every Class in Every School" Survey, 2021)

The previous data paints a picture of the troubling conditions that impact 2SLGBTQIA+ youth. When considering this information as well as the following, it is essential to bear in mind that it is the systemic and intersectional discrimination and oppression against 2SLGBTQIA+ communities that negatively affect mental health and well-being and create oppressive and unsafe environments. Being 2SLGBTQIA+ does not cause increased mental illness – it is the systemic oppression that leads to increased vulnerability for members of these communities.

LGBTQ2S youth have 14x the risk of suicide than straight cisgender youth
(519.org, Dr. Alex Abramovich, 2016)

25 – 40% of homeless youth in Canada identify as LGBTQ2S
(519.org, Dr. Alex Abramovich, 2016)

67% of trans youth reported self-harm
(519.org, Dr. Alex Abramovich, 2016)

25% of trans youth reported running away from home
(519.org, Dr. Alex Abramovich, 2016)

**Creating inclusive, safe,
and welcoming schools is
within our control.**

DDSB Data

The data included here was gathered by the DDSB's Research and Strategic Analytics Department. This is the most recent data from the Student Census and the School Climate Surveys.

Students who identify as 2SLGBTQ+ **are less likely to indicate that they are NOT** being bullied, or that they feel safe at school (2018-2019 and 2022-2023 DDSB Census Data).

Students who identify as 2SLGBTQ+ **are less likely to feel they** belong and connect, have meaningful and engaged learning, or have supportive relationships (School Climate Survey 2022-2023).

Students identifying as 2SLGBTQ+ graduated secondary school at a rate of approximately **4% lower** than cisgender/heterosexual students (2018-2019 and 2022-2023 DDSB Census Data).

Please refer to page 22 of the [DDSB Anti-Oppression Strategy](#) for guidance and requirements if you are gathering your own data.



Posters, books, representation of same-sex families in brochures and/or school activities would help us feel included, but none are seen...makes us feel invisible.

— DDSB student

Developing History of Two Spirit Communities

Recognition Statement

While learning about terms like **Two-Spirit** and **Indigiqueer**, it is important to not make generalized assumptions about how an Indigenous person will identify. In contemporary discourse, an Indigenous person might adopt English terms like trans, Indigiqueer, non-binary, and Two-Spirit to express their identities. They may also identify with more than one of these terms, or “another 2SLGBTQIA+ identity term or may find a word in [their] own language that fits for [them]” (TransCareBC - Indigenous Gender Identities). Everyone has a right to have their identity affirmed and respected.

Indigenous Identity Before Colonization

Before colonizers arrived on this land we now call Canada, Indigenous categorizations of gender and sexuality were not rooted in cisnormativity and heteronormativity and were “as diverse as Indigenous cultures themselves” (Driskill, Finley, Gilley & Morgensen, 2011; Hunt, 2015). This diversity can be seen in language, as “two thirds of the 200 Indigenous languages spoken in North America are said to have contained terms to describe individuals who were neither men nor women” (Tafoya, 1997). These words are often difficult to translate into English, “because they describe identities which are at once about one’s role in a spiritual and cultural system, as well as expressive of gender identity and/or sexuality” (Sarah Hunt PhD - An introduction to the health of Two Spirit People: Historical, Contemporary, Emergent Issues).

Research and oral histories of Indigenous peoples, prior to contact with settlers, “reflect widespread respect and honour for Two Spirit [and Indigiqueer] people. Within many [Indigenous] cultures, the roles of Two Spirit [and Indigiqueer] individuals carried unique responsibility that were vital to the nations’ collective well-being and survival, including as teachers, knowledge keepers, healers, herbalists, child minders, spiritual leaders, [and so on] (Driskell, 2011; Tafoya, 1997).

That said, it is important not to romanticize Indigenous communities as being uniformly accepting of gender and sexual diversity, as this disregards the colonial violence inflicted on Indigenous Peoples which sought to forcefully assimilate them into heteronormative and binary gendered identities.

Two-Spirit

The term **Two-Spirit** has long been used by Indigenous Peoples to pay homage to Indigenous terminology and cultural practices around gender and sexuality that move beyond colonial heteronormative and cisnormativity. While it has a long history within Indigenous communities, it was officially coined in 1990 by Anishinaabe elder Myra Laramée, who defined a Two Spirit person as “someone who holds both feminine and masculine energy or spirit” (How two-spirit people are ‘coming in’ to their communities).

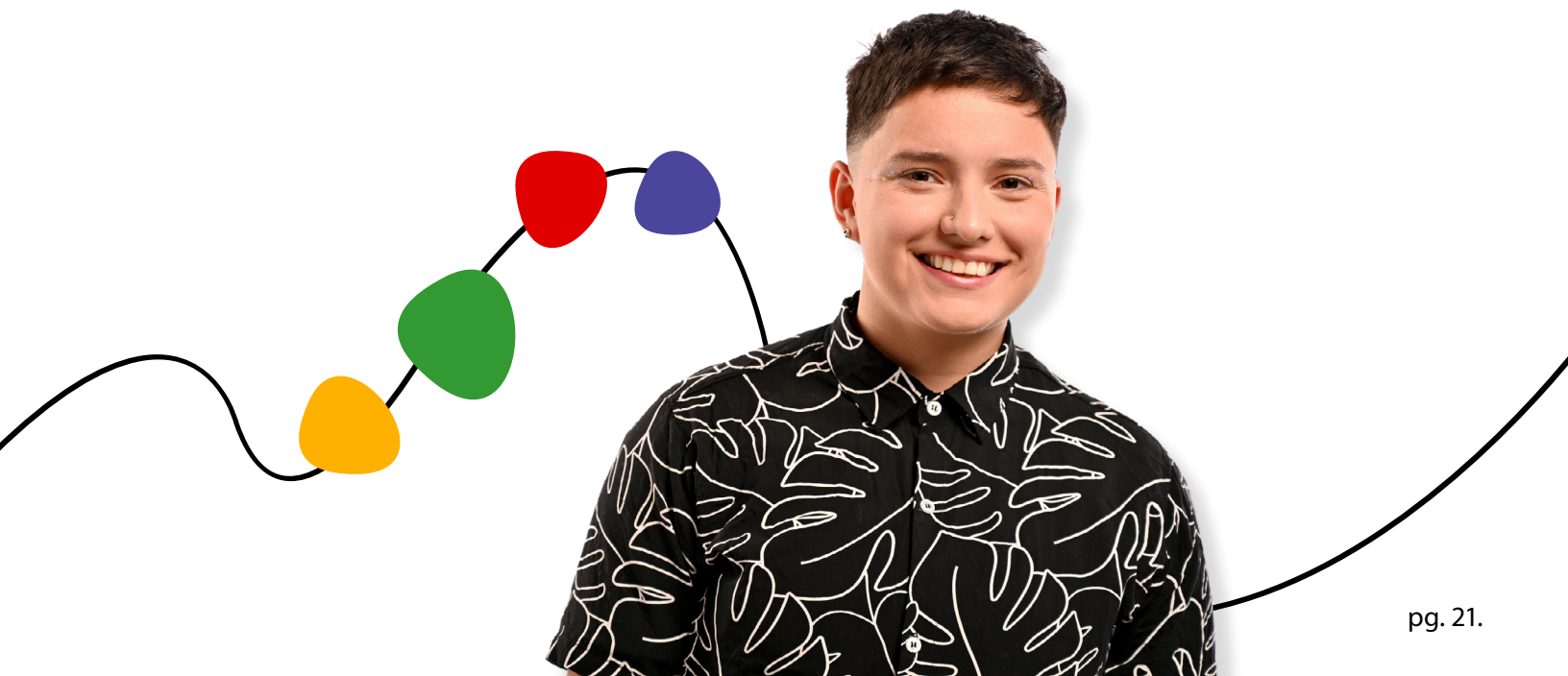
Cree Scholar Alex Wilson, spoke about how “there is a lot of variation of what it means but in general the term is a self descriptor that is used by Indigenous People to recognize that there is a diversity of sexuality and gender within our cultures, [...] There is a whole range of diversity within humans and Two-Spirit recognizes and validates that. It is a modern term that recognizes our ancient understandings of our identity” (Alex Wilson in Unreserved).

Indigiqueer

Some Indigenous folks identify as Two-Spirit, some prefer Indigiqueer, and some use both identifiers as they both play important roles in their identity. Someone also may identify themselves as Indigenous and Transgender but not Two-Spirit.

The term Indigiqueer was created by Thirza Cuthand (Plains Cree) in 2004 and has gained prominence through many Indigenous authors and activists, such as Joshua Whitehead, who is Oji-Cree/Nehiyaw and identifies as Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer. He says he likes Indigiqueer because he believes that it “puts us in the contemporary moment. It gives us futures.” (Joshua Whitehead - Indigiqueer - All My Relations Podcast).

A person may use Indigiqueer because they believe the link between Two-Spirit identity and traditional practices is something they do not relate to, as they feel they are not as connected to their Indigenous cultural traditions as others.



For further learning, check out these video resources

SCAN ME!

Two Spirit



Indigiqueer



Indigiqueer/TwoSpirit Documentary

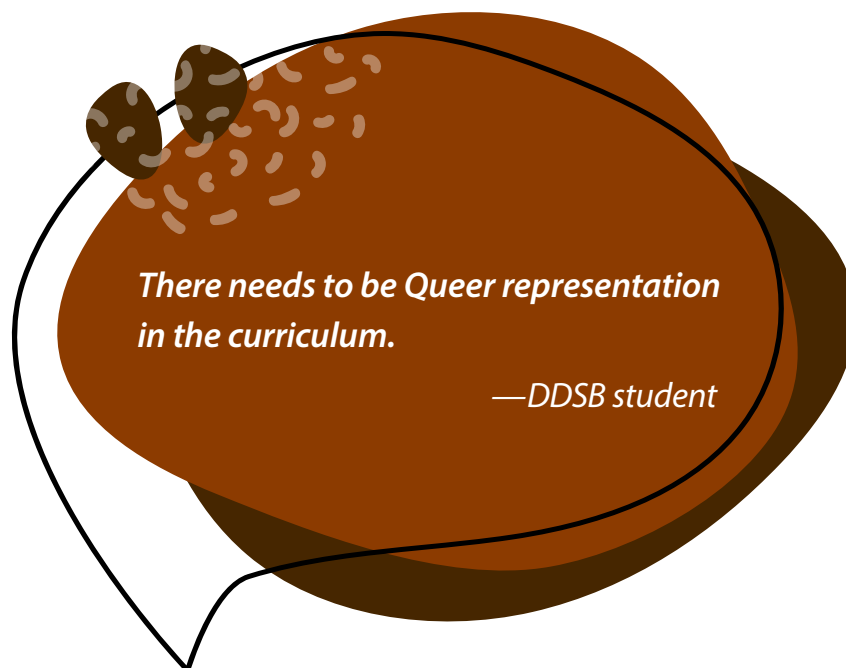


Indigenous Identity After Contact

As an act of resistance against colonization, which sought to persecute Two-Spirit, Indigiqueer, and Gender Diverse Indigenous Peoples, many Indigenous communities hid their knowledge of gender and sexual diversity and “stopped passing on the Two-Spirit teachings to the next generation” (Safe and Caring Schools for Two Spirit Youth).

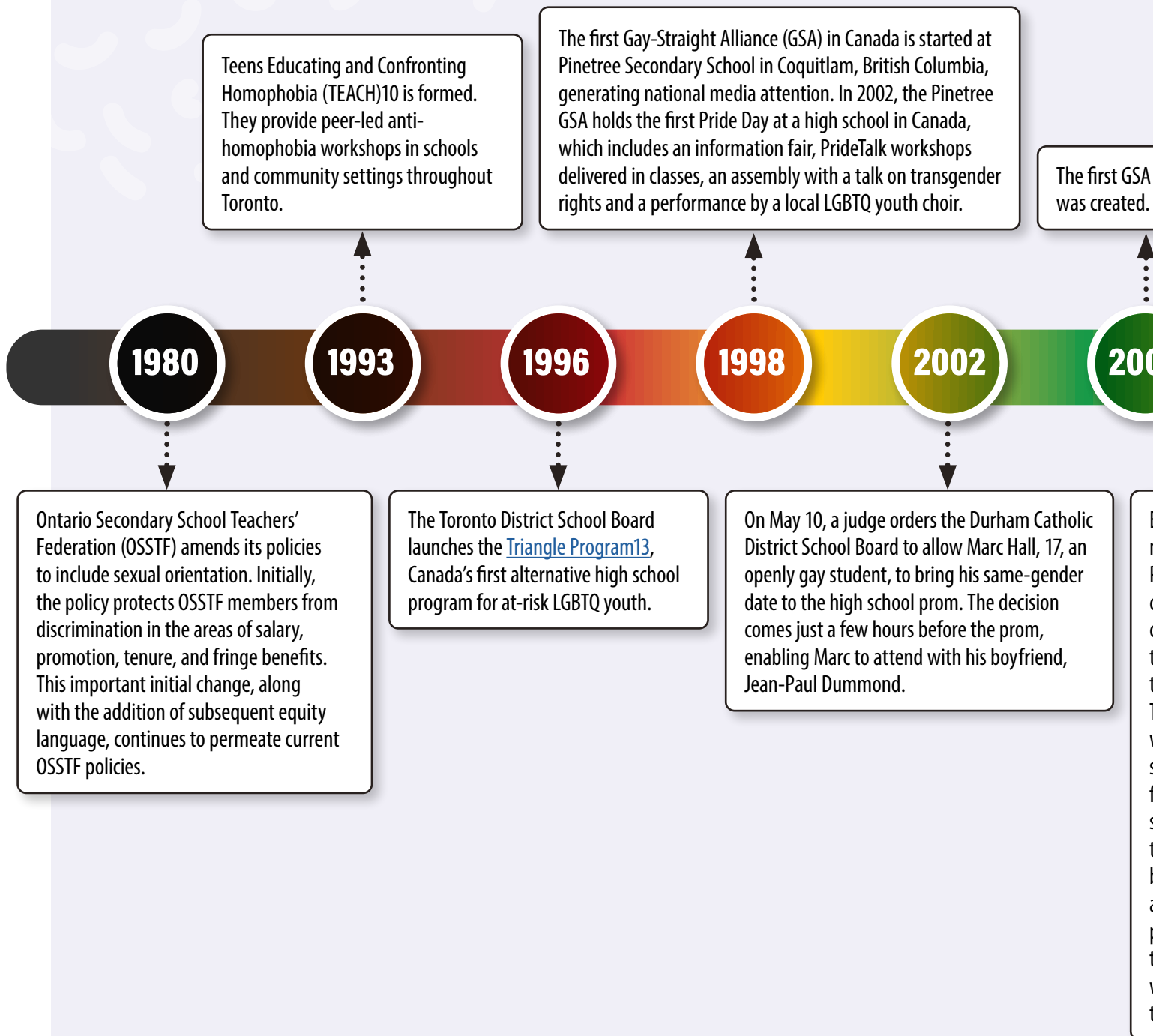
The immense harm of forced assimilation through The Indian Act, Residential Schools, and many other genocidal acts, led to increased distrust and discrimination for Two Spirit, Indigiqueer, and Gender Diverse peoples. Over time, many communities “forgot the roles and the importance of Two-Spirit people and today they suffer from the stigmas perpetuated by homophobia [and transphobia]. As a result, some Two-Spirit individuals find themselves shut out of community gatherings— disowned or ostracized”. Regardless, Indigiqueer, gender diverse and “Two-Spirit people were and continue to be integral members of Indigenous communities” (Safe and Caring Schools for Two Spirit Youth).

Many Indigenous Peoples are beginning to heal and revitalize Two-Spirit teachings within their communities. In the face of colonization, this resurgence is celebrated by the youth of today, like Beany John, who says, “we’re here, we’re not going anywhere. It’s just colonization, you know they tried. They really tried. You can’t tear us down. [...] We’re too solid and we’re just too Indigenous.” (Indigiqueer - VeraCity).



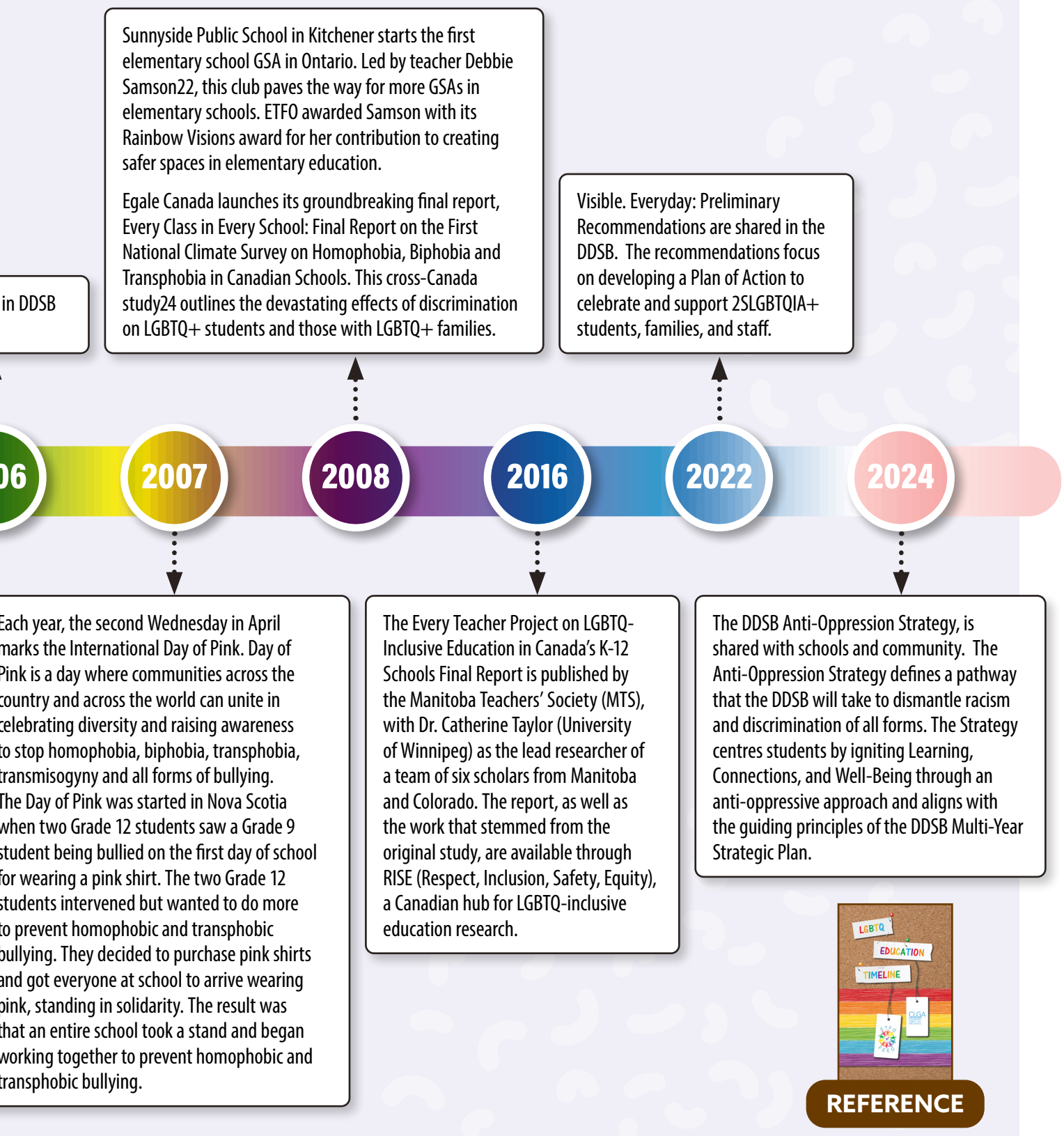
The Historical Path of 2S

This timeline was created with ongoing data from the DDSB and the
Federation of Ontario (EFTO) and C



LGBTQIA+ Communities

LGBTQ Education Timeline (2017) published by Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario and the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives.



Student Rights

To be treated with dignity and respect

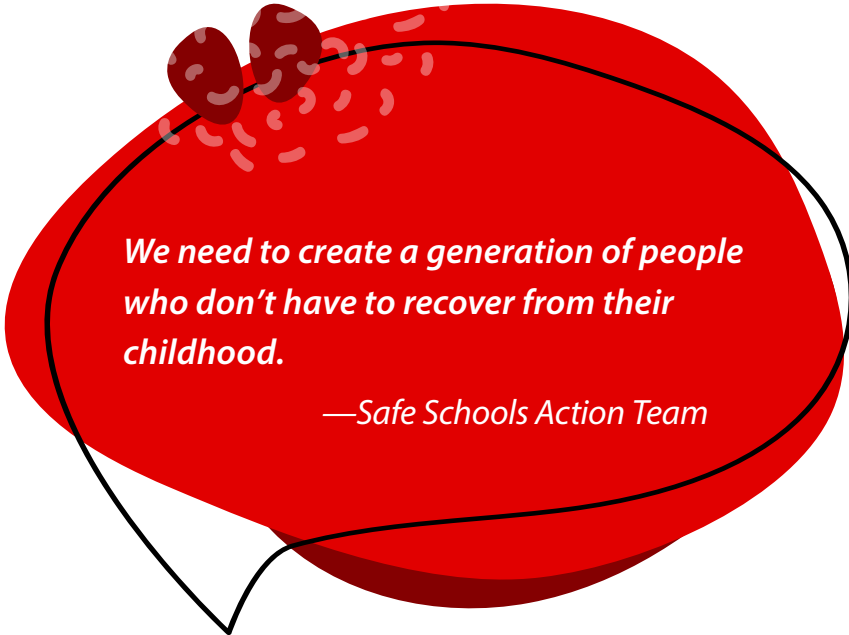
To be free from all forms of discrimination and hate

To learn in inclusive, accessible and equitable spaces

To have a say in decisions that affect them

Employee Rights

Employee Rights are outlined in the the Human Rights Policy Safe and Respectful Workplace and Harassment Prevention Policy. The DDSB is committed to providing working and learning environments in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Every individual has an equal right to learn, work and feel safe in an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment under the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#) (Code) and the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA). In addition, Section 2.1 states that: workplace harassment and disrespectful conduct are unacceptable. It is the policy of the Board to address any such incidents with seriousness and sensitivity.



*We need to create a generation of people
who don't have to recover from their
childhood.*

—Safe Schools Action Team

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

Taking Action Together

The Commitments to all 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals in the DDSB

2SLGBTQIA+ individuals have existed throughout time. The DDSB recognizes the diverse realities and intersectional lived experiences of discrimination, harassment, bullying, and harm against 2SLGBTQIA+ people in our communities. It is important that we understand and reflect on these experiences to effectively plan, support, and address safety and well-being for 2SLGBTQIA+ people in our schools and workplaces.

As a district, we must actively challenge anti-2SLGBTQIA+ discrimination, hate, oppression, and erasure, wherever and whenever possible, so that each student, staff, family, and community member can be safely visible, everyday.

The DDSB is creating learning and working environments where 2SLGBTQIA+ students, staff, and families will flourish through meaningful learning, connected communities, and personal and collective well-being. We are committed to dismantling homophobia, transphobia, biphobia and all forms of discrimination and oppression in our schools and workplaces to ensure that 2SLGBTQIA+ students and staff feel affirmed in who they are in safer spaces for everyone. Student and staff rights, and duty bearer responsibilities are critical to meeting these commitments.



The Ten Priorities in Support of 2SLGBTQIA+



Represent, Affirm and Recognize all Identities

- Representation of diverse and intersectional 2SLGBTQIA+ identities in learning (K-12)
- Identify, cultivate, develop, and retain 2SLGBTQIA+ identifying staff



Cultivate Safe Learning and Working Environments

- Staff explicitly and visibly support, respect, include, and affirm 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, ensuring inclusive climates and improving safety
- 2SLGBTQIA+ supports for DDSB employees



Foster Meaningful Connections

- 2SLGBTQIA+ connection and voice of staff and students across the system
- Develop, strengthen, and demonstrate value of employees across all departments and affinity networks



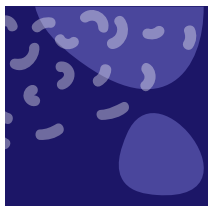
Support Mental Health and Well-being

- Embrace 2SLGBTQIA+ school/ community members and improve mental health and well-being supports through inclusive school and workplace practices
- Strong 2SLGBTQIA+ partnerships and relationships, internal (Child and Youth Support Workers, Psychological Services, Social Work, Anti-Oppression Department, Positive School Climates, Employee and Family Assistance Plan) and external to the DDSB (refer to the partnership list)



Create Accessible Learning Opportunities

- Accessibility - re-thinking school environments/ activities/ programs that are binary gender segregated
- Honouring student-communicated identity



Represent, Affirm and Recognize meaningful and reflective

Representation of diverse and intersectional 2SLGBTQIA+ identities in learning (K-12)

Commitment: Create spaces where students and staff will see themselves in learning across the curriculum and within school culture, with the inclusion of 2SLGBTQIA+ identities.

Action: Develop, implement and review high school courses.

Considerations:

- How are 2SLGBTQIA+ identities, in addition to intersectional identities, being recognized and supported through the development and planning of courses across disciplines in your school?
- How are student voices and ideas about identity inclusion being gathered and implemented throughout the course development and review stages?
- How are heteronormative and cisnormative beliefs being disrupted and reconsidered?
- If there is not a Queer Studies course running, how do you identify barriers or engage students?
- How often is course content being reviewed to ensure programs are providing current perspectives and removing outdated information?
- What specific 2SLGBTQIA+ affirming learning opportunities, such as queer studies are available?
- Are other identity specific courses (Black studies, Indigenous studies) routinely incorporating intersectional identities which include 2SLGBTQIA+?

Action: Create ongoing suggested classroom/library/school/cross-curricular K-12 resources in alignment with DDSB policies and procedures.

Considerations:

- How is 2SLGBTQIA+ representation and learning organized and integrated across the curriculum?
- How is Student Voice encouraged?
- How are staff encouraged to engage in the learning to support diverse resource selection?
- Is there easy access to and practical knowledge of the resource selection process and resource selection tool?
- How is professional development available to staff across departments/divisions?

Recognize All Identities through learning opportunities

Identify, cultivate, develop, and retain 2SLGBTQIA+ staff

When diversity of thought becomes more evident in the DDSB, at the classroom, school and board levels, more 2SLGBTQIA+ staff will be retained and/or seek leadership opportunities.

Commitment: Retain and/or seek leadership opportunities for more 2SLGBTQIA+ staff in the classroom, school, and system level positions.

Action: Review of hiring practices to identify and address barriers to hiring 2SLGBTQIA+ staff?

Considerations:

- How have leaders, managers, and administrators been made aware of equitable and inclusive policies and procedures including language, recruitment, postings, and interviews in the hiring practices across all departments?
- What opportunities for professional development focused on creating welcoming interview environments for 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals exist?
- What barriers might there be for staff to willingly participate in hiring and promotion processes?
- How does the system ensure ongoing, regular review of inclusive hiring practices, resources, and training?

Action: Develop on-going support for 2SLGBTQIA+ staff in all stages of their work cycle.

Considerations:

- How have leaders, managers, and administrators been made aware of equitable and inclusive policies and procedures including language, recruitment, postings, and interviews in the hiring practices across all departments?
- What opportunities for professional development focused on creating welcoming environments for 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals exist for all DDSB employees?
- How is it recognized when some voices are absent?
- What barriers might there be for staff to willingly participate in hiring and promotion processes?
- How does the system ensure ongoing, regular review of inclusive hiring practices, resources, and training?

Action: Provide training to leaders on how to create inclusive mentorship opportunities to support mentorship of aspiring leaders.

Considerations:

- Who is being encouraged and supported as aspiring leaders?
- How does the leadership training team consider aspects of identity and intersectionality when planning supports including privacy, professional development, mentor matches, etc.?



Cultivate Safe Learning and centre joy and intention

Staff explicitly and visibly support, respect, include, and affirm 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, ensuring inclusive climates and improving safety.

Commitment: Create, maintain, and enhance safe and inclusive learning and working environments that include safe spaces for 2SLGBTQIA+ people, including an understanding of how important a safe space is for 2SLGBTQIA+ students, staff and families.

Action: Provide consistent and accurate messaging that schools and workplaces are safe space.

Considerations:

- Is a Pride flag visible in a public space in your school or workplace?
- How will you know that the learning and working space is safe and inclusive for 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals?
- How is the significance of the publicly displayed Pride flag highlighted through the daily activities, conversations, and actions taking place within the building?
- In recognizing that a publicly displayed flag will not create safer spaces alone, how can staff communicate their commitment to building safer spaces?
- Whose voices do you need to engage? How will you know?
- How are school staff communicating information and addressing questions about the importance of and rationale for the Pride flag?

Action: Create Safer Spaces for 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals including Gay-Straight Alliance (GSAs) groups in all schools.

Considerations:

- Why are GSAs and/or affinity spaces at the school being offered or not, and have considerations regarding barriers to students joining been identified and acted on?
- How are staff accessing resources available for GSA and intersectional club space leaders?
- What meaningful and consistent actions are utilized in each DDSB building which affirm 2SLGBTQIA+ identities?
- How is student voice considered, and can students identify and access safe spaces in their environment?
- Can staff and students trust that every adult will follow policies and procedures to respond to harmful statements/actions, in keeping with their duty bearer responsibilities? How are opportunities provided to learn about bias, power, and privilege?

Working Environments that nally disrupt oppression

Action: Provide easy access to clear protocols and pathways, for filing complaints and concerns, and outlines for conciliatory measures for staff, students, families, and community members.

Considerations:

- Does a person feel safe utilizing the complaint process? How can one be sure that the process does not perpetuate or create harm?
- How can patterns/trends/systemic issues be gathered in your learning/working environment?

2SLGBTQIA+ supports for DDSB employees

Commitment: Staff have skills and resources that assist in navigating differing beliefs, to help them feel empowered to address situations.

Action: Develop professional learning for employees to build their capacity to confidently have conversations with families/staff/students on issues of sexual identity, gender identity and gender expression.

Considerations:

- How are opportunities for professional development being accessed by system and staff leaders?
- How are the Duty Bearer Responsibilities, Human Rights Policy, Indigenous Education Policy, Safe and Respectful Workplace Policy and Anti-Oppression Strategy consistently being applied in daily practice?
- How are 2SLGBTQIA+ slurs, epithets, and instances of hate addressed and communicated about at a system level?
- What training and resources about human rights are made available to all staff throughout DDSB?
- How is new learning about disrupting/interrupting oppression being applied in the school community?



*Have an Inclusive PRIDE flag flying
all year.*

—DDSB student



Foster Meaningful Conn

2SLGBTQIA+ connection and voice of staff and students across the system

Commitment: Provide opportunities to connect with identity affirming groups across the DDSB.

Action: Invite and engage access opportunities for 2SLGBTQIA+ Alliance Groups (Virtual and/or in person).

Considerations:

- How is privacy considered for students and staff who wish to participate?
- What safety issues should staff consider for youth in GSAs?
- How are all students/staff able to engage in safe opportunities for connection?
- What is the level of understanding by all staff/students of why an opportunity may be unsafe?
- How do staff consider and address the safety concerns surrounding for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth in terms of preparation, events, social media messaging, and post event activities?
- How are intersecting identities intentionally considered and supported?

Develop, strengthen, and demonstrate value of employees across all departments and affinity networks

Commitment: Ensure purposeful gathering of knowledge, lived experiences, and feedback for authentic voices in district/school initiatives.

Action: Ongoing consultations with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, staff, and students, and external affinity networks.

Considerations:

- How are the voices of students, staff, affinity networks, and communities gathered and honoured?
- How are barriers identified and addressed?
- How are data collection tools made accessible, and barrier-free to all, while protecting privacy? (Refer to page 22 in the Anti-Oppression Strategy)
- What training is being done to support staff in the bias-free collection of data? (e.g., GSA leaders)
- How is the DDSB working to gain and maintain trust with 2SLGBTQIA+ staff, community members, and external affinity networks?

Connections for all identities

Commitment: Demonstrate the value of staff time and expertise for work on 2SLGBTQIA+ initiatives.

Action: Create a 2SLGBTQIA+ facilitator portfolio within the Anti-Oppression Department.

Considerations:

- How are 2SLGBTQIA+ needs and supports being considered when building capacity across the system?
- How will the interdepartmental teams be encouraged and supported?
- How will the balance between being proactive and reactive to the needs within the system be considered?
- How is active Ally capacity being built and supported in all staffing areas?

Meaningfully include, consult, and engage individuals and organizations with established expertise in intersectionality and 2SLGBTQ-inclusive education.

—Egale



Support Mental Health and Well-being

Embrace 2SLGBTQIA+ school/community members and improve mental health and well-being supports through inclusive school and workplace practices.

Commitment: Support accessible resources and training for staff and community to increase safety and mental health supports for 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals.

Action: Critically review existing practices to refine, create, provide, and share resources that affirm 2SLGBTQIA+ identities.

Considerations:

- How are 2SLGBTQIA+ voices being listened to in the development of a shared understanding of what belonging and a sense of community means?
- How can the principles of Universal Design for Learning be used to support the best mental health outcomes for all students?
- How will staff ensure mental health supports are affirming for all students including 2SLGBTQIA+ students?
- How will staff ensure mental health supports are affirming for all students including 2SLGBTQIA+ students?
- How are school teams encouraged to complete annual training and on-going review of school practices and resources to address mental health supports for 2SLGBTQIA+ identifying individuals?

Commitment: Ensure consistent implementation of inclusive and respectful language across schools to promote safer spaces.

Action: Develop a common and consistent understanding of the need to respond to slurs, epithets, or hate speech (online or in-person) directed towards 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals.

Considerations:

- How are staff using DDSB policies and procedures and the Duty Bearers Responsibilities to support impacted individuals and to address slurs, epithets or hate speech (online or in-person) targeting individuals and/or school community?
- What are the barriers to all staff consistently addressing slurs, epithets or hate speech (online or in-person) targeting individuals and/or school communities and what professional development is needed to support them?

Well-being of all students and staff

Strong 2SLGBTQIA+ partnerships and relationships, internal (Child and Youth Support Workers, Psychological Services, Social Work, Anti-Oppression Department, Positive School Climates, Employee and Family Assistance Plan) **and external** (refer to the partnership list) **to the DDSB.**

Commitment: Support resources, training and connection opportunities for families and staff in supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals.

Action: Purposeful creation of ongoing training through multiple parent/guardian/caregiver engagement access points (e.g., School Community Council (SCC), Parent Involvement Committee (PIC); etc.).

Considerations:

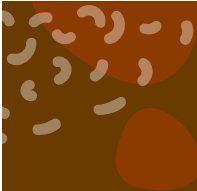
- Does the school have readily available community resources and supports to share with students and parents/guardians?
- How does staff build awareness for parents and caregivers of available community resources and supports?
- How can staff be supported to use the Guest Speakers Guide?

Commitment: Building and maintaining ongoing relationships and consultation with community partners.

Action: Establish a 2SLGBTQIA+ working group that is inclusive of community partners and all employee groups

Considerations:

- How is a 2SLGBTQIA+ system working committee that includes community and all employee groups being developed and maintained?
- How are staff creating relationships with community partners?
- What processes are used to review partnerships?
- How are diverse and intersectional identities being considered and included on the advisory committee?



Create Accessible Learning eliminating ba

Accessibility - re-thinking school environments/activities/ programs that are binary gender segregated.

Commitment: Supporting a culture of safety, privacy, self-expression, and inclusivity in all learning environments.

Action: Establish high expectations for safe, inclusive, and respectful practices in all school environments.

Considerations:

- What process do schools use to support students' gender identity in all aspects of school life: awards, washrooms, change rooms, athletics, teams, etc.?
- How do staff show up for students and colleagues?
- Are staff visible throughout the day with a commitment to disrupting and addressing all forms of discrimination?
- How can staff use the principles of Universal Design for Learning in ensuring safer spaces?

Commitment: Acknowledge and affirm sexual identity, gender identity and gender expression.

Action: Prioritize the use of individuals' communicated names and pronouns for all interactions as specified by the individual.

Considerations:

- How are opportunities for professional development being created?
- What are best practices for system leaders to model the use of pronouns in verbal and written communication (in person or electronic)?
- How are staff invited to use their own pronouns in verbal and written communication (in person or electronic)?
- What processes are in place for staff/students who are not honouring individuals' communicated names and pronouns?
- What systems are in place to support correct communication of names and pronouns for supply staff?

g Opportunities by identifying and rriers for all identities

Honouring student communicated identity

Commitment: Build staff capacity that centres the student's right to privacy and their identity.

Action: Use names and pronouns in identified spaces as communicated by the student.

Considerations:

- How does student voice guide when and to whom names and pronouns are shared?
- What processes are in place to ensure the integrity of their privacy?
- Do staff know how to build inclusive and welcoming environments in which students feel comfortable in sharing their name and pronouns?
- How are individuals and the school held accountable?

Action: Re-examine virtual platforms and in-person groups to ensure learning spaces support 2SLGBTQIA+ students and staff and do not "out" students.

Considerations:

- Address barriers to active and full participation in all activities while maintaining privacy of identity.
- What training is provided to staff, including new administrators and clerical staff, on in person interactions and digital platforms to support privacy and identity?
- How are individuals and the school held accountable?

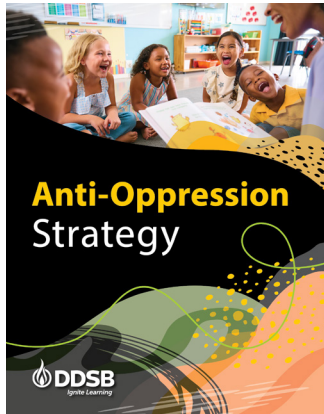
Action: Re-examine virtual platforms and in-person groups to ensure learning spaces support 2SLGBTQIA+ students and staff and do not "out" students.

Considerations:

- How are human rights being considered?
- How are the DDSB's guidelines being implemented for both onsite and offsite events?

Resources

[Anti-Opression Strategy](#)



[Egale Resource](#)

[The 519](#)

[Canadian Museum of History, Histories and Identities in Canada](#)

Supporting Personal Learning and Scholarship

[Indigenous Education Policy and Procedure](#)

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

[Safe and Respectful Workplace and Harassment Prevention](#)

[OHRC Policy on Preventing Discrimination Because of Gender Identity and Gender Expression \(2014\)](#)

[Still In Every Class In Every School, Full Report, Egale, 2021](#)

[Still In Every Class In Every School, Executive Summary, Egale, 2021](#)

[Every Teacher Project, Egale, 2015](#)

[LGBTQ Education Timeline, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario U Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, 2014](#)

Community & Partnerships

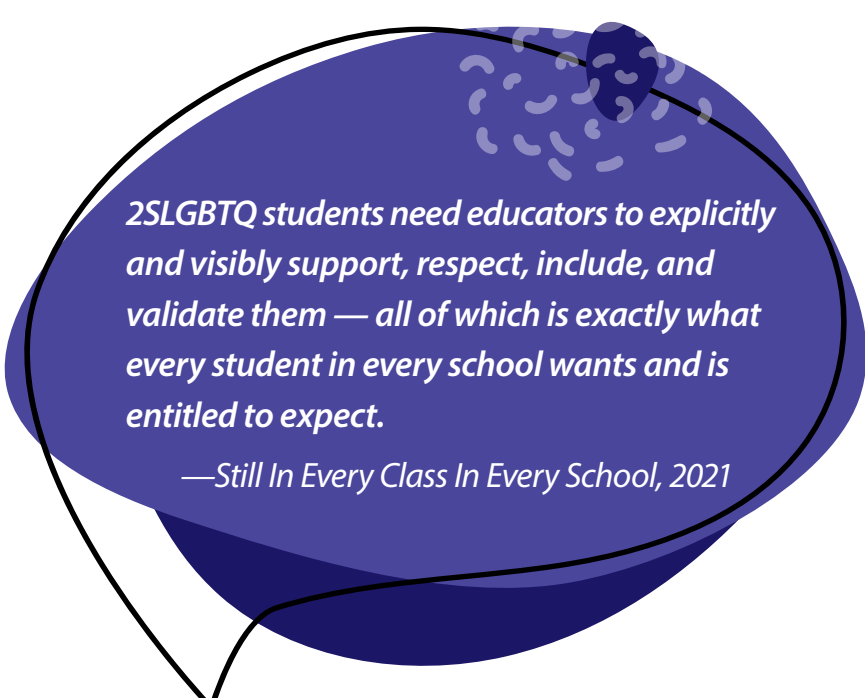
Community partners are an integral component of support for DDSB 2SLGBTQIA+ staff, students, and parents/guardians/families. This is a dynamic list, always being reassessed. For the most up to date resources, students and families should refer to the Anti-Oppression Department resources on the DDSB website. Staff may access resources on SPARK.

Accountability; Check for Impact Review Cycle

- ▶ **First Review** **November 2025**
- ▶ **Second Review** **March 2026**
- ▶ **Third Review** **November 2026**
- ▶ **Fourth Review** **March 2027**

Each school's Anti-Oppression Team will review action items twice per year to determine evidence-based results. Information will be shared with staff and School Community Council once per year.

The [Anti-Oppression department](#) will gather and report on school-based data once per year.



2SLGBTQ students need educators to explicitly and visibly support, respect, include, and validate them — all of which is exactly what every student in every school wants and is entitled to expect.

—Still In Every Class In Every School, 2021

Terms and Definitions

Please note. Terminology evolves. For most up to date definitions, please refer to the [DDSB Anti-Oppression page](#).

Ally - A term used to describe someone who is actively supportive of 2SLGBTQIA+ people (or any other oppressed community.) It encompasses straight and cisgender allies, as well as those within the 2SLGBTQIA+ community who support each other (e.g., a lesbian who is an ally to the bisexual community).

Aromantic - A person who lacks romantic attraction or interest in romantic expression. An aromantic person's sexual and romantic orientations may differ (e.g. aromantic lesbian), and they may have romantic and/or sexual partners.

Asexual - Asexual is an umbrella term that encompasses a broad spectrum of sexual orientations. According to the 2SLGBTQIA+ Resource Center, asexuality is a spectrum. Some people may experience no sexual or romantic attraction toward anyone, while others may experience varying degrees of sexual or romantic attraction toward people. Those who identify with this orientation do not have to abstain from sex to be asexual.

Biphobia - The fear, hatred, or aversion of people who are attracted to more than one gender.

Bisexual - A person who identifies as bisexual can be of any gender. Bisexuality means that a person feels attraction toward their own gender and other genders or toward anyone regardless of their gender. The LGBTQIA Resource Center notes that some people may use the terms bisexual and pansexual interchangeably to describe their sexual orientation.

Cisgender - A person who identifies with the gender they were assigned at birth.

Drag - A performer who dresses in exaggerated gendered attire for entertainment purposes.

Gay - A person who identifies as gay typically only feels sexual attraction toward people of the same gender. Socially, people use this term to refer to men who are romantically and sexually attracted to men. However, those in the community use it as an umbrella term.

Gender - An individual's personal and social identity as a man, woman or non-binary person (a person who is not exclusively a man or a woman). A person's gender may differ from their sex at birth, and from what is indicated on their current identification or legal documents such as their birth certificate, passport or driver's license. A person's gender may change over time.

Gender dysphoria - A medical diagnosis often required by health providers and/or health insurance plans before prescriptions for hormones or gender affirming surgeries will be provided. It can be understood as discomfort or distress experienced by a person who feels their sense of their gender identity differs from their body, based on societal expectations.

Gender expression - How a person publicly expresses or presents their gender. This can include behaviour and outward appearance such as dress, hair, make-up, body language and voice. A person's chosen name and pronouns are also common ways of expressing gender. Others perceive a person's gender through these attributes.

Gender-fluid - A person whose gender identity varies over time and may include male, female and non-binary gender identities.

Gender identity - Each person's internal and individual experience of gender. It is a person's sense of being a woman, a man, both, neither, or anywhere along the gender spectrum. A person's gender identity may be the same as, or different from, their birth-assigned sex. A person's gender identity is fundamentally different from, and not related to, their sexual orientation.

Gender non-conforming - An individual who does not follow normalized gendered roles based on the sex they were assigned at birth and may or may not identify as trans.

Heterosexual/Heteroromantic - A person who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to people of a different gender than themselves.

Heterosexuality - People who are heterosexual, or "straight," typically feel sexual and romantic attraction toward people who are of a gender different than their own.

Homophobia - The fear, hatred, or aversion of people who experience same-sex attraction.

Homosexual (*no longer commonly used in English) - This term is no longer in common use. See "gay" and "lesbian". The term homosexual has fallen out of favour as it is associated with the historic medical understanding of same-sex attraction as a mental illness. However, equivalents of "homosexual" are commonly used in French and other languages.

Homosexuality - Homosexuality is a term describing those who are emotionally and physically attracted to people of the same gender. However, the LGBTQIA Resource Center states that this term is outdated and may have negative connotations due to the past.

Indigiqueer - While many Indigenous folks identify as Two-Spirit, some prefer Indigiqueer, or use both identifiers as they both play particular roles in their identity. Someone also may identify themselves as Indigenous and Transgender but not Two-Spirit. For instance, a person may use Indigiqueer because they believe the link between Two-Spirit identity and traditional practices is something they do not relate to, as they feel they are not as connected to their Indigenous cultural traditions as others.

Intersex - An umbrella term to capture various types of biological sex differentiation. Intersex people have variations in their sex characteristics, such as sex chromosomes, internal reproductive organs, genitalia, and/or secondary sex characteristics (e.g. muscle mass, breasts) that fall outside of what is typically categorized as male or female.

Lesbian - Those who identify as lesbian are usually women who feel sexual and romantic attraction toward other women. Some nonbinary people - those who do not identify with the traditional binary sexes of male and female - may also identify as lesbians. This may be because they feel a closer connection to womanhood and are mainly attracted to women.

Non-Binary - Refers to a person whose gender identity does not align with a binary understanding of gender such as man or woman. It is a gender identity which may include man and woman, androgynous, fluid, multiple, agender, no gender, or a different gender outside of the “woman—man” spectrum.

Outing - Exposing 2SLGBTQIA+ identity to others without their permission. Outing someone can have serious repercussions on employment, economic stability, personal safety or religious or family situations.

Pansexual - A person whose choice of sexual or romantic partner is not limited by the other person's sex, gender identity or gender expression.

Queer - Historically, a derogatory term used as a slur against 2SLGBTQIA+ people, this term has been reclaimed by many 2SLGBTQIA+ people as a positive way to describe themselves, and as a way to include the many diverse identities not covered by common 2SLGBTQIA+ acronym.

Questioning - A person who is uncertain about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity; this can be transitory or a lasting identity.

Sex - The anatomical classification of people as male, female or intersex, usually assigned at birth.

Sex assigned at birth - The sex, male, female or intersex, that a doctor or midwife uses to describe a child at birth based on their external anatomy.

Sexual fluidity - People's sexuality can be fluid. This means that their sexual orientation is not fixed, and they may not define themselves by any particular sexuality.

Sexual orientation - Romantic and sexual attraction for people of the same or another sex or gender.

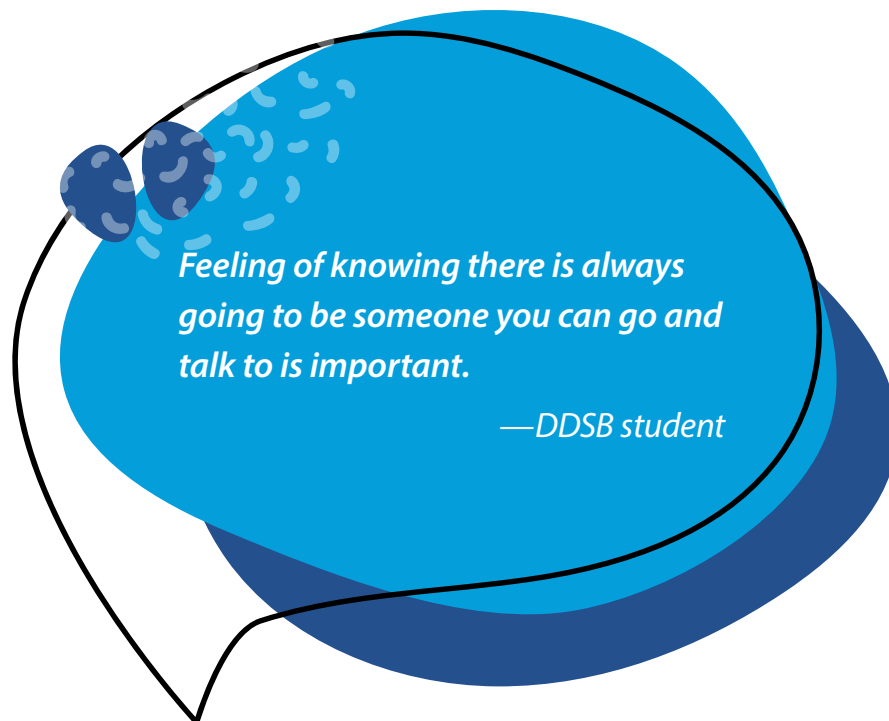
Transgender - A person whose gender identity differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. It includes, but is not limited to, people who identify as transgender, transgender woman (AMAB-Assigned Male at Birth), transgender man (AFAB – Assigned Female at Birth), gender non-conforming, gender-fluid, or gender queer.

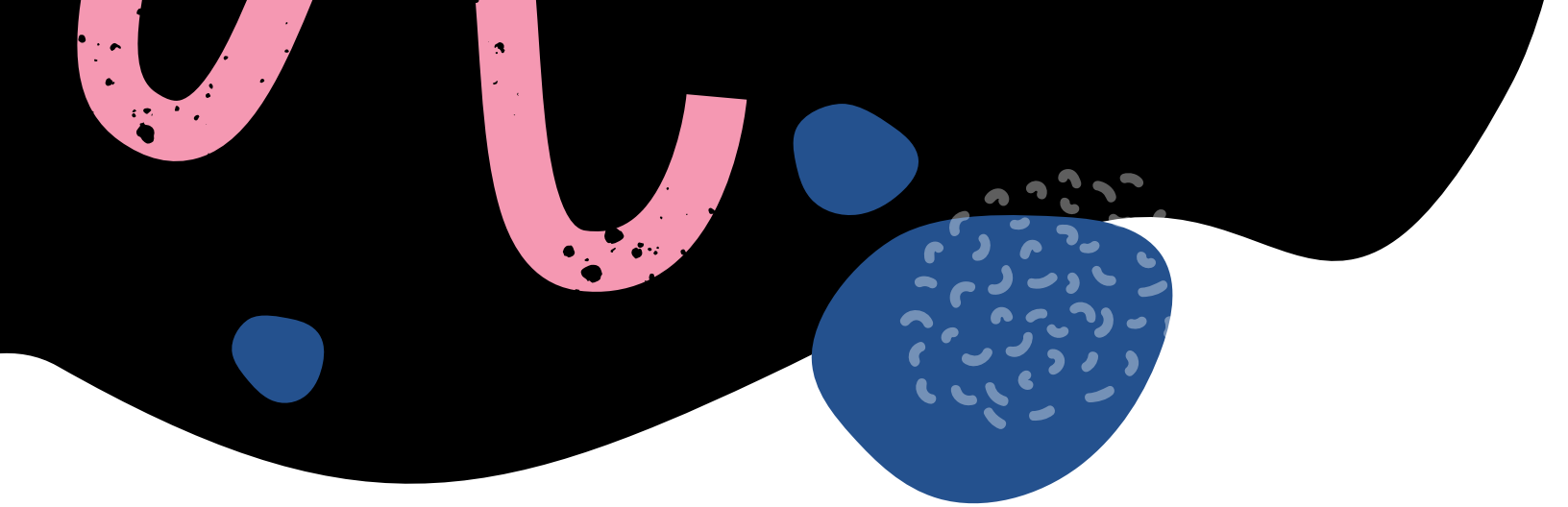
Transitioning - A series of processes that some transgender people may undergo to live more fully as their true gender. This typically includes social transition, such as changing name and pronouns, medical transition, which may include hormone therapy or gender affirming surgeries, and legal transition, which may include changing legal name and sex on government identity documents. Transgender people may choose to undergo some, all or none of these processes.

Transphobia - The fear, hatred, or aversion of people whose gender identities differ from the sex they were assigned at birth.

Two-Spirit - A culturally-specific identity used by some Indigenous people to indicate a person whose gender identity, spiritual identity and/or sexual orientation comprises both male and female spirits.

2SLGBTQIA+ - An acronym for "two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual or agender" with a "+" sign to recognize the limitless sexual orientations and gender identities used by members of the community.





Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement to the Visible. Everyday Committee members, past and present. Each has contributed to the goal of providing the best possible supports for students, staff, and families who identify as part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community through actions which support the efforts of the DDSB and the Anti-Oppression department.

The Visible. Everyday committee gathered input and data from three main groups: (1) students, (2) staff, and (3) families. These voices, along with the voices of community partners who have historically supported the Queer and Transgender Communities, helped to craft a list of recommendations intended to inform the work of System Leaders and the creation of this compendium.

Finally, we are grateful for the support and direction of Director Camille Williams-Taylor, Superintendent Margaret Lazarus and the entire Administrative Council.

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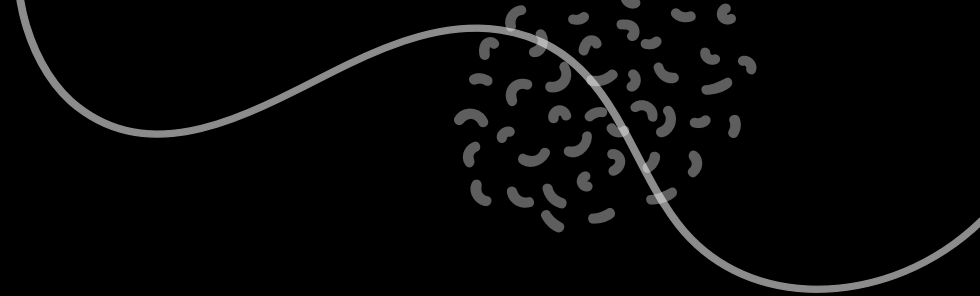


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Community Connections

Kids Help Phone

<https://kidshelpphone.ca>

LGBT Youthline

<https://www.youthline.ca>

pflag Canada

<https://pflagcanada.ca>

Prideline Durham

<https://distresscentredurham.com/gethelp/lgbtprideline>

Trans Lifeline

<https://translifeline.org>

Youthspace.ca

<http://www.youthspace.ca>