Multiculturalism & Anti-Racism Policy - Regulations

Classification: **Code:**

Section A: Foundation and Basic   File: *ACA-R-1

Commitments

Note: Many terms used in this regulation are explained in the glossary, included at the end of

the regulation.

Building and Maintaining Community

The Board of School Trustees (the "Board") values dialogue with all parent, student and community groups. The collaboration is important for the creation of effective educational policies, programs and services. The Board recognizes that special efforts may be needed to involve parents because of differing cultural assumptions and histories related to education. Additionally, the Board recognizes the need to create an inclusive environment in which all parents and students from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds feel welcome and can contribute.

The Board is committed to providing opportunities for diverse communities in order to develop equity in education and create an environment free from racism and shall:

- facilitate discussions with diverse communities and provide translation and interpretation as needed to facilitate these discussions;
- provide opportunities for all communities to enhance their awareness, knowledge and understanding of racism;
- ensure that specialized staff, such as the Aboriginal Educational Enhancement Workers, Multicultural Liaison Workers, Settlement Workers in Schools and the Engaged Immigrant Youth Program Workers work collaboratively with all members of the school community to provide services according to community needs;
- maintain the Multicultural and Anti-Racism Advisory Committee and encourage collaboration among the advisory committees.

Honouring Language

The Board recognizes the role of language in learning. The Board values language learning opportunities and affirms the importance of the learner's first language. The Board also recognizes the power of language to create inclusion or exclusion.

The Board is committed to creating a climate of respect for the linguistic diversity of the community and language that honours and creates inclusion of all and shall:

- continue to recognize and value the importance of first language(s) and prior educational experiences of students;
- support the development and implementation of additional language programs;
- develop communication strategies that will assist and inform parents in their first language about their children's progress;
- ensure that all efforts are made to use inclusive and welcoming language that respects the racial, cultural and religious diversity of its communities.

Inclusive and Multi-Centric Curriculum

The Board recognizes that curriculum must present a global view of society from diverse perspectives that include the experiences and achievements of culturally diverse groups. The perspectives of all cultural groups must be included to encourage all students to develop pride in their own identity and to value the cultural identities and ancestries of others.

Examination and modification of existing curricula are required to eliminate racial, ethno-cultural and religious discrimination. An effective curriculum development process is one that is collaborative and supportive of educational equity.

The Board is committed to developing and implementing racism-free curricula and shall:

- support equitable access to quality programs for all learners;
- develop and implement new inclusive curricula designed to eliminate racism;
- develop and implement multi-centric approaches to curriculum and delivery;

- select learning resources to eliminate racism, Eurocentric bias and negative cultural bias;
- select learning resources that reflect the experiences and contributions of our diverse society.

Equitable Assessment, Evaluation and Placement

The Board recognizes that the assessment and evaluation process must be multi-faceted in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of what students are capable of achieving. The previous experiences, knowledge and cultural and linguistic background of all students must be considered.

All staff members share the responsibility for creating a welcoming and inclusive environment which honours and respects the diversity of all students. The district and school-based reception process needs to support assessment and evaluation procedures that are appropriate for each student.

The Board is committed to developing, implementing and evaluating processes for assessment, evaluation and placement that accommodate cultural differences and shall:

- examine and monitor practices in assessment, evaluation, placement, engagement and tracking of students and implement practices that address the Racial Achievement Gap and support the principles of Multicultural and Anti-Racism Education;
- ensure that parents are adequately informed about assessment and evaluation procedures and involved in placement decisions.

Implementing Staff Development

The Board recognizes that general staff development on Multiculturalism, Diversity and Anti-Racism is fundamental to creating organizational change. All staff members need the knowledge, skills and attitudes to understand and accommodate diversity and difference. Additionally, specific staff development in Multicultural, Diversity and Anti-Racism Education is crucial to understand and accommodate diverse learning and communication styles. An

effective staff development program on Multicultural and Anti-Racism Education will promote the academic, social and emotional growth of all students.

The Board is committed to providing in-service training opportunities for all employees to enhance their awareness and competence in working effectively with people of diverse backgrounds and shall:

- offer staff and professional development programs to all employees that heightens understanding of the racial, ethno-cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of the community;
- implement staff development programs that promote the principles of Multicultural and Anti-Racism Education;
- support the integration of Multicultural and Anti-Racism Education into existing and new staff development programs.

Preventing (Eliminating) Racism, Ethno-Cultural and Religious Harassment

The Board recognizes that every individual has the right to freedom from harassment in the workplace and educational environment. A positive environment protects and promotes the dignity, worth and human rights of every person and supports mutual respect and co-operation among individuals. Racial, ethno-cultural or religious harassment in any form by any members of the school community, employees, students, parents, trustees and other stakeholders is unacceptable.

The Board is committed to supporting an environment free from intentional or unintentional racial, ethno-cultural or religious harassment for all students, employees and trustees and shall:

- provide opportunities for employees, students and trustees to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to identify and respond effectively to harassment;
- develop and implement procedures for resolving incidents of racial, ethno-cultural and religious harassment for all members of the school community;
- monitor and investigate reported incidents of racial, ethno-cultural and religious harassment with annual reports of the number of incidents reported and outcomes.

Equitable and Inclusive Employment Practices

The Board recognizes that effective employment practices remove barriers to fair and equitable hiring, promotion and training opportunities. Employment practices, consistent with Multicultural and Anti-Racism Education, would eliminate prejudice, stereotyping, ethnocentrism, racism and discrimination. Furthermore, the Board recognizes that in removing barriers and practicing equitable and inclusive employment practices it would ensure that the organization is reflective of the communities it serves.

The Board is committed to developing employment practices that are consistent with the principles of Multicultural and Anti-Racism Education and shall:

- provide equitable access to employment opportunities and fair treatment in the workplace;
- develop recruitment, interview, selection, training and promotion practices and procedures that identify and remove barriers;
- monitor and examine applications, selections processes, recruitment, retention and progression of all employees with regular reports.

Glossary of Terms Used

Note: The glossary is provided to offer increased clarity. All definitions have been adapted and developed from a variety of sources, including those listed at the end of this section.

Anti-Racism is the practice of identifying, challenging, preventing and eliminating racism, in particular, by isolating, raising awareness and challenging beliefs (such as prejudice, bias and stereotypes) that maintain racism. It uses direct action at personal and institutional levels to create and implement action to fight racism for individuals and within an organization, workforce or group.

Bias is the usually unconscious process of favouring or not favouring individuals or groups based on internalized prejudices. Recent science has shown that neural pathways can be created based on stereotypes and prejudices that create unconscious bias that impacts our behavior and actions.

Cultural Diversity refers to the variety and range of cultures, languages, religions and backgrounds within the group.

Discrimination is unfair, unequal and differential treatment of individuals and/or groups often based in prejudice; in particular prejudice based on race, gender, class, religion, age, ability, sexual orientation or ethnicity. Discrimination can include overt differential treatment and create barriers to prevent access or opportunity such as through policies and practices that exclude and/or limit people or groups.
Prejudice/Bias + Action = Discrimination.

Diversity the presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, some of which are visible and others that are not. It recognizes that we are all different and that our differences can be a source of strength for the group.

Educational equity is recognizing that for diverse groups and for students' educational success, systemic barriers that have excluded particular groups, such as racialised groups, must be challenged and removed. This involves looking at all aspects of education such as recruitment and retention of students, their success and participation and the curriculum and assessment.

Employment equity is recognizing that for diverse groups and individuals, employment equity requires that systemic barriers that have excluded particular groups, such as racialised groups, be challenged and removed. This involves all aspects of employment such as recruitment, selection, retention and progression of staff, workplace environments and pay equity.

Equality is about treating everyone equal and the same. Equal treatment does not recognize group or individual differences and in particular, the inequality of experiences, opportunities and options due to racism.

Equity/Equitable is about fairness; everyone is equal and different. It involves accommodating differences and recognizing that some people may face barriers or disadvantages in particular

due to social inequalities such as racism, which require accommodation in order to achieve the same goal. Equity is not necessarily the same as equality, although at times it can be.

Ethno-cultural refers to a group of people whose members identify with each other through a common heritage, language, culture religion, ancestry or nationality.

Eurocentric is the tendency to present information, organize policies and practices from a European perspective, so for example, the work week and holidays are based on European calendars and religious/historical holidays and history is taught with regards to the European perspective and impacts.

Ethnocentrism is the tendency to believe that one's ethnic or cultural group is centrally important and that all other groups are measured in relation to one's own. Ethnocentrism means to judge others relative to their own group's culture, values and behaviours.

Harassment is behaviours and actions that result in annoying, insulting or treating individuals or groups badly. It can include such things as name-calling, jokes, insults, ignoring or general rudeness. It is the *impact* of these behaviours and not the *intent* that is considered in defining harassment.

Identity (in multiculturalism and anti-racism) refers to the characteristics determining who or what a person is, what group(s) they belong to and specifically their ethno-cultural groups. It not only includes how individuals might self-identify but also how others might identify them, which includes racial identities.

Inclusion/Inclusive describes any effort to include people and value the diversity of their differences, so that they are able to participate as valued, respected and contributing members of society/community/organisation. In education, inclusion means all members of a school community (students, staff and parents) have equal access to the resources of their community and the opportunity to participate in all areas, regardless of their race, gender, social class, religion, sexual identity, sexual orientation or other dimension of diversity. An Inclusive organization will reflect their communities' diversity.

Multi-Centric Education literally means having more than one centre and is the practice of challenging ethnocentric and particularly Eurocentric practices and perspectives in education, offering diverse viewpoints of each issue. It also means recognizing and challenging the cultural bias in teaching and learning and offering different cultural styles of teaching and learning, acknowledging the strength and values in all styles not favouring one position over others.

Multicultural and Anti-racism Education is the practice of identifying, challenging, preventing and eliminating racism as it occurs within education, by isolating, raising awareness and challenging beliefs and practices that maintain racism both on an individual level and systemically. This includes challenging staffing issues, curriculum and pedagogy, assessment and climate issues.

Prejudice means to pre-judge; a preconceived assumption, belief, value or attitude about a person or group, either positive or negative, not based on experience, without adequate evidence or information, usually based on stereotypes.
Stereotype + Values = Prejudice

Race/Racial is a socially constructed belief that human beings can be divided up into distinct racial groups that are biologically different (based on such characteristics as skin colour, shape of eyes or nose) and that these differences are hierarchical, with some races being superior to others. Although science has proven the notion of races and racial differences to be false, the belief has been ingrained into cultural worldviews and is perpetuated despite evidence to the contrary and is thus recognized as a social construct.

Racial Achievement Gap refers to the different academic achievement and success rates of students and in particular that there is a significant gap between racialised groups in Canada and their fellow White students. This gap is due to systemic racism inherent in educational systems and society. These racialised students include Aboriginal students and Black students in particular and some groups of Hispanic, South Asian and Asian students when linked with migration, specific ethno-cultural identity and class.
Specific source for the term Racial Achievement Gap:

Singleton, G. E. and Linton, C. (2006). *Courageous conversations about Race.* Thousand Oaks,
California: Corwin Press, Inc.

Racialised is a general term used to refer to all people who experience racism regardless of
ethno-cultural identity and specifically recognises that racism is based on a false belief that races
exist. Sometimes racialised people self-define as 'people of colour' or 'visible minority' to
highlight their experience of racism.

Racism is a belief, attitude and practice that is based on a false assumption that a group of
people can be categorised based on race, in particular by using skin colour as a criteria and that
different races are superior or inferior to others. This belief has led to legitimizing some groups
over others creating a power imbalance. This power imbalance has resulted in actions limiting
'racialised' individuals and groups from full participation and can happen on an individual level
or on a systemic or institutional level.
Discrimination + Power = Racism

Stereotyping is a conscious or unconscious shared understanding about a whole group of
people, based on generalized, simplified characteristics. Some stereotypes may seem positive,
but the impact of all stereotypes is negative. They are generalizations about all members of the
group and ignore individual uniqueness and differences.

Systemic Discrimination occurs when the policies and practices of the
organization/community/society overtly or covertly prevent access, limit or exclude specific
individuals and groups for full participation in the organization/community/society.

Systemic Racism occurs when policies, rules, behaviours, practices and structures that are built
into various systems and services in society result in disadvantages for people of a certain race,
ethnic, national or religious group, although they may seem or are intended to be neutral.

Glossary Sources

All definitions have been adapted from a variety of sources, in particular 1 and 2 with the other
resources consulted for additional information.

Access to Media Education Society. (2002). *Peer perspectives, racism 4 reel: Anti-racism resource package.* p. 22.

B.C. Human Rights Coalition. (February 2003). *Responding to incidents of racism and hate: A handbook for service providers*. pp. 4-10; 28-32.

Canadian Human Rights Act. (R.S., 1985, c. H-6).

Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services: Aboriginal, Multiculturalism and Immigration Programs Department. (March 2003).   *Future directions: Setting the path for anti-racism and multiculturalism programming in British Columbia, Steering Committee Report*. pp. 19-21.

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2009). Realizing *the promise of diversity: Ontario's equity and inclusive education strategy*, website, at www.edu.gov.on.ca.

Singleton, G. E. and Linton, C. (2006). *Courageous conversations about race.* Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press, Inc.

Vancouver School Board. (2009). *Break the silence: The power of active witnessing, curriculum documents*, pp 14, 18-20, 47-48.

R**eferences:**

Board Approved: 1995 June 28

Revised: 1999 February SMT Responsibility: AS-LS

Legal Ref: *Human Rights Code of B.C.*

Cross Ref:

AC/AC-R Non-discrimination

GBA Equal Opportunity Employment

IGBI English as a Second Language

IIA Instructional Material

JFCK/JFCK-R Violence Prevention