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DIVERSITY and EQUITY EDUCATION
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1. GENERAL PHILOSOPHY

- 1.1 The Winnipeg School Division is committed to an educational philosophy that recognizes the fundamental equality of people of all origins, abilities, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ethnic origin, ancestry, culture, socio-economic background or status, religion or spirituality, family status, mental and physical abilities, physical features including body size and shape, intelligence or ability, learning preferences, ancestry or place of birth, first language or mother tongue. It supports and accommodates the acceptance, respect and appreciation for all people, their languages and cultures, for their commonalities as well as their differences.
- 1.2 Diversity and Equity Education endeavours to prepare students with the knowledge and skills to function socially, emotionally, politically, and economically in Canadian society. Students will be provided with opportunities to:
- develop a positive self-image;
 - become contributing members of Canadian society;
 - enjoy equal rights in a diverse, safe, positive and inclusive learning environment.
- 1.3 The Winnipeg School Division is committed to meeting the diverse needs of all learners.
- 1.4 The Diversity and Equity Education policy supports, and is congruent with, existing Winnipeg School Division policies and the fundamental human rights and protection outlined in the Human Rights Code and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
- 1.5 Diversity and Equity Education is the process of making education reflect a belief of the basic equality of all people irrespective of gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ethnic origin, ancestry, culture, socio-economic background or status, religion or spirituality, family status, mental and physical abilities, physical features including body size and shape, intelligence or ability, learning preferences, ancestry or place of birth, first language or mother tongue. Learning environments present opportunities to transform diversity into benefits and advantages for all.
- 1.6 Diversity and Equity Education is an integral part of all school programming within the established outcomes of the curricula approved by Manitoba Education.
- 1.7 Student-established and student-led activities and organizations that promote areas of human diversity, including gay-straight alliances, will be run consistent with and in compliance with school division/school policies, and will be open to all students who wish to participate in an appropriate manner.

2. DEFINITIONS

The definitions below are intended to be helpful descriptors.

- 2.1 Diversity encompasses all the ways in which human beings are both similar and different. It means understanding and accepting the uniqueness of individuals, as well as respecting their differences. Diversity may include, but is not limited to gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ethnic origin, ancestry, culture, socio-economic background or status, religion or spirituality, family status, mental and physical abilities, physical features including body size and shape, intelligence or ability, learning preferences, ancestry or place of birth, first language or mother tongue.



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- 2.2 Equity refers to the provision of equitable opportunity, equitable access to programming, services, and resources critical to the achievement of outcomes for all students and the staff who serve them. Equity and equality are not necessarily synonymous, as equity can be achieved through unequal means.
- 2.3 Gender identity: refers to a person's internal sense of gender, which may or may not be the same as one's biological sex.
- 2.4 Sexual orientation: is the term used to describe an individual's sexual, psychological and emotional feelings of attraction towards another person.
- 2.5 Age: The prohibition against age discrimination does not apply to occupations which are restricted by law to persons over the age of majority, such as store clerks for liquor stores or emergency vehicle drivers. Where there is not a legislative requirement that a person be of the age of majority, employers cannot discriminate on that basis. If an applicant is under the age of sixteen, age alone is not a bona fide reason to refuse to consider them, if they have indicated an intention to obtain the proper work permit.
- 2.6 Ethnic origin: ethnic discrimination is the unequal treatment of people based on the fact that they belong to a certain ethnic or national group. Ethnic discrimination can also involve placing a person in a different position on the basis of religion, skin colour or nationality.
- 2.7 Ancestry: discrimination on one's family or ethnic descent.
- 2.8 Culture: Cultural discrimination refers to exclusion, restriction or hate that is directed at a person or a group on the basis of perceived or real differences in cultural values and beliefs, socio-economic background or status.
- 2.9 Religion or spirituality: is unequal treatment of an individual or group based on their beliefs.
- 2.10 Family Status: will be interpreted to include being a parent or not being a parent, regardless of the manner in which a person becomes a parent; and it may also include any other familial or perceived familial relationship.
- 2.11 Mental ability: mental disorder, developmental disorder or learning disorder.
- 2.12 Physical abilities: physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness.
- 2.13 Physical features: body size and shape including appearance/age/cultural based features or other defining traits about your body.
- 2.14 Intelligence or ability: the ability to acquire and apply knowledge and skills in a mode of learning most suitable for the student.
- 2.15 First language or mother tongue: refers to the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood by the person at the time the data was collected. If the person no longer understands the first language learned, the mother tongue is the second language learned.
- 2.16 Direct Discrimination: discrimination which is an obvious case of unequal treatment, whether intentional or unintentional. An example would be either the intentional ignoring or the unintentional overlooking of students from a particular cultural group for favoured assignments.



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- 2.17 Discrimination: unequal treatment, intentional or unintentional, directed against a group as a whole or an individual because they are member of or presumed to be a member of that group, rather than on the basis of their actual characteristics. Discrimination may be either direct or indirect.
- 2.18 Socio-Economic Status: status accorded by society based on one's level of social prestige and one's share of resources and power within society.

3. GOALS OF DIVERSITY AND EQUITY EDUCATION

- 3.1 The general goals of Diversity and Equity Education in The Winnipeg School Division shall include:
- (a) The development of positive attitudes toward diversity including sexual orientation and gender identity within our communities;
 - (b) The development of an understanding of, and respect for the individual's identity, and;
 - (c) The development of an understanding of, and respect for the identity of others in a diverse society.

4. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

- 4.1 The Winnipeg School Division is committed to providing students with the opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values necessary to live in and contribute to a complex and diverse world by:
- (a) Ensuring that the principles and practices of Diversity and Equity Education permeate teaching and learning in all subject areas;
 - (b) Ensuring that teaching and learning resources accurately reflect Canada's diverse communities.
 - (c) Ensuring curriculum and instruction are guided by the principle of inclusion and meets the individual student needs and offers opportunities for students to reach their potential.
 - (d) Curriculum and instruction must respect and demonstrate an acceptance of and appreciation for all students with diverse backgrounds. Classroom activities and materials shall positively reflect the diversity of gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ethnic origin, ancestry, culture, socio-economic status, religion or spirituality, family status, mental and physical abilities, physical features including body size and shape, intelligence or ability, learning preferences, ancestry or place of birth, first language or mother tongue.



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5. ASSESSMENT AND PLACEMENT

- 5.1 The Winnipeg School Division is committed to assessment and programming decisions that are sensitive to students' diverse backgrounds, including personal and/ or family experiences by:
- (a) Assuring bias does not limit a student's access to programming and placement and that such decisions be evidence based;
 - (b) Ensuring that parents/guardians are able to consider and make informed choices about their child's educational program and in cases where students are 18 years or older that they are provided with support and opportunities to make informed choices about their educational programs;
 - (c) Providing ongoing assessment, programming, and placement decisions that meet individual student needs and offer opportunities for students to reach their potential. This process must take into account: gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ethnic origin, ancestry, culture, socio-economic status, religion, family status, mental and physical disability, previous education and the student's future plans.

6. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- 6.1 The Winnipeg School Division is committed to providing learning opportunities and training for all employees to enhance their competencies and sensitivity in working effectively with students, parents, staff and community members of diverse backgrounds including gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ethnic origin, ancestry, culture, socio-economic background or status, religion or spirituality, family status, mental and physical abilities, physical features including body size and shape, intelligence or ability, learning preferences, ancestry or place of birth, first language or mother tongue.

7. SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- 7.1 Effective school-community partnerships involve representation and active participation from the members within the community which allows for the inclusion of perspectives, experiences, and the identification of the needs which will enhance educational opportunities for all learners. The Winnipeg School Division recognizes the need to create an inclusive environment in which all students, parents, staff and community members from diverse backgrounds feel welcome and included.
- 7.2 The Winnipeg School Division shall continue to support relationships that promote effective participation in the education process by:
- (a) Encouraging parent advisory councils, school based parent-teacher committees and parent centres to be reflective of the diverse communities they serve;
 - (b) Ensuring communication with parents and community partners is respectful of their language and culture;
 - (c) Providing opportunities for the school community to enhance their mutual understanding of, and respect for diversity;
 - (d) Ensuring staffing practices in accordance with policy GBA-Employment Equity.



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8. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 8.1 The Chief Superintendent, or designate, shall be responsible for the implementation of this policy.
- 8.2 The senior administration shall ensure members of their departments implement the general goals of Diversity and Equity Education policy.
- 8.3 The principal shall be responsible for ensuring that the general goals of the Diversity and Equity Education policy are implemented in the school.
- 8.4 All employees shall be responsible for ensuring that their practices and conduct are consistent with the general philosophy and goals of Diversity and Equity Education.
- 8.5 The Professional Support Services Personnel shall be responsible for providing assistance to the instructional staff in the development of an awareness of Diversity and Equity Education, appropriate instructional strategies, assessment and resources.

Legislative Context:

- i Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- ii Manitoba Human Rights Code
- iii Public Schools Appropriate Education Act