

Integrated Equity Framework

Interim Report



June 2017

Introduction

The Integrated Equity Framework (IEF) Action Plan 2016-2019 aims to improve achievement and well-being for each and every student, while closing persistent achievement, opportunity and participation gaps for all.

To be successful in this work, every decision we make as a system must align with our guiding principles of equity:

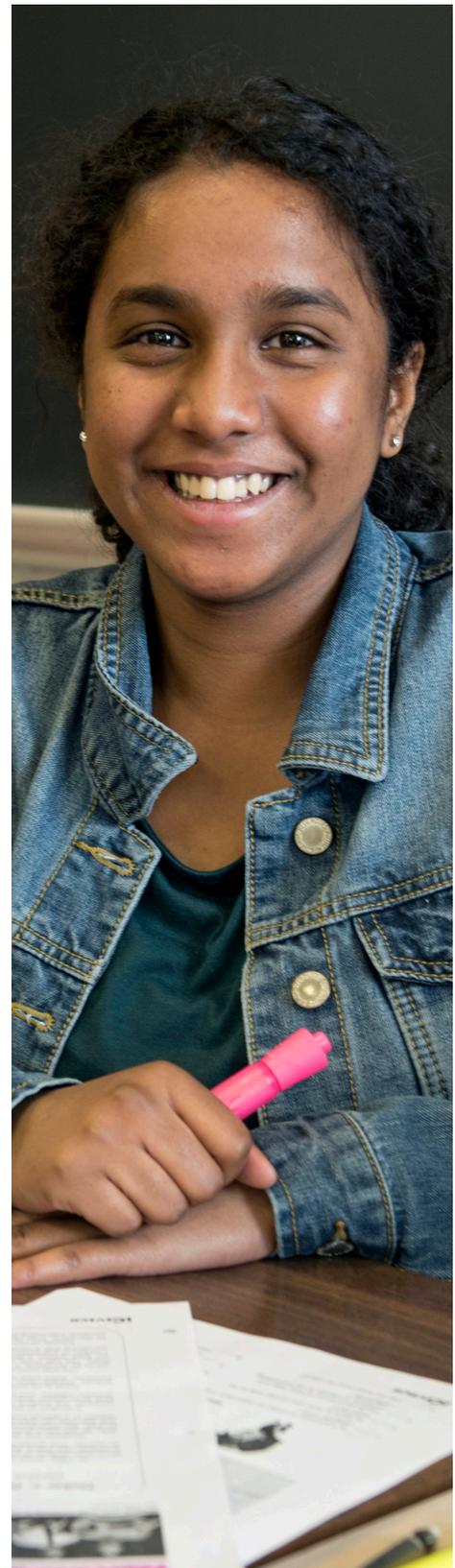
- Supporting each and every student through an equitable and inclusive learning culture.
- Identifying, confronting and eliminating barriers.
- Aligning resources where needed.
- Sharing leadership and building staff capacity.
- Empowering staff, students and community members to share their voice.

For our students to succeed, we must create cultures of fairness, respect and trust, that value equity and inclusiveness, in every school and work place. We must address equity in a bold, honest and transformative manner. As caring adults, through our relationships with students, we must be the driving force behind transformation. Our students cannot do it alone. Their well-being depends on the presence of caring adults in the school.

The Toronto District School Board has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to equity through our innovative programs, inclusive curriculum, professional learning and unique strategies to close achievement, participation and opportunity gaps. The IEF sets out a coordinated, strategic approach that focuses concrete actions in seven key component areas: *Policy, Budget, Access and Secondary Program Review, the School Improvement Process, Leadership Capacity, Inclusion and Special Education, and Employment Equity.*

Over the Plan's three-year time frame, these actions will lead to measurable improvement by:

- setting a consistent policy direction;
- aligning resources with key system priorities; and
- providing the necessary tools, resources and support to create equitable, inclusive learning cultures in every school and classroom.



Introduction

At the core of the IEF is an understanding that in order to improve, each of us, staff and Trustee, must be both a learner and a leader. For this reason, we have dedicated a substantial part of our work in Year One towards initiating system-wide cultural transformation. We have made significant progress over the past year, focusing on the needs of all our students, schools and communities, especially those who have been traditionally underserved. Working to interrupt the status quo, we have taken a long, hard look at our processes and assumptions, confronting power, privilege and our own biases.

Concrete actions have included:

- Conducting extensive consultation on the Board's revised Equity policy, which will guide all aspects of our work (to be presented to Board in the fall).
- Connecting with hundreds of community members through the Enhancing Equity Task Force, to discuss the barriers of social and economic inequity and how to overcome these.
- Engaging hundreds of students to share with us their ideas for improving our secondary programs.
- Providing professional learning to Principals and school teams to support effective implementation of the Home School Program (HSP).
- Working with the Special Education Advisory Committee on ways to ensure that students, as required, are identified, placed and supported appropriately.
- Supporting school leaders to develop local improvement plans based on data-driven conversations within their communities, introducing Inclusive Design, which provides a comprehensive understanding of what Equity-focused school leadership can encompass.
- Transforming practices to ensure more equitable and inclusive hiring.
- Creating spaces, through the Leadership Capacity Plan, where all staff, whatever their role, title or position, can feel safe exploring and reflecting on their own individual biases and learning needs.
- Delivering anti-oppression/anti-racism training for Trustees and Senior Team, with a commitment to provide it to all Board staff.
- Consulting with students about secondary programs, equitable access and opportunities, and how to support specific student communities.
- Improving service delivery and accessibility in schools and workplaces.



Centering all our work on anti-oppression practices, we are now better equipped to critically examine our biases and structures. And, as a result, we are better able to confront the systemic impact of historic exclusion, displacement and marginalization, including anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Black racism, anti-Semitism, homophobia and Islamophobia.

Introduction

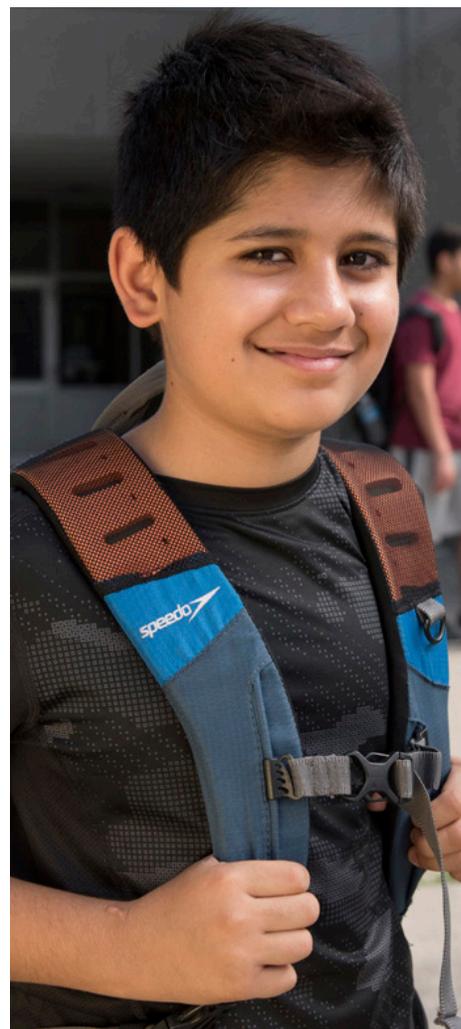
Moving Forward

The IEF is not a static plan; it will continue to evolve, with the work of Years Two and Three driven by the outcomes and learning of the preceding year. Our collective efforts and learning to date frame and focus our next steps. We will continue to engage and work with our communities, while reflecting on and revising our strategies as necessary to best serve and support our students.

We will:

- Continue to engage in professional learning centered on anti-oppression and anti-racism.
- Challenge and interrogate our current suspension and expulsion practices to ensure that all students are treated fairly and are empowered to maximize their learning time.
- Work with students and families so that transitions to secondary school reflect our conviction that when we create the right conditions, every student can achieve at a high level.
- Work more closely with parents so that practices connected to Special Education (e.g. Identification, Placement and Review Committee and Individual Education Plans) create consistency and allow for authentic parent engagement and involvement. This will include ensuring an opportunity for parents to provide feedback regarding their IPRC experience, in order to improve our processes.
- Deliver site-based, classroom-embedded professional learning connected to Special Education, including both student identification and program delivery.
- Continue to remodel the Home School Program with an anti-racist, anti-oppression stance and an emphasis on greater inclusion, to address the over-representation of racialized and Indigenous students in Special Education.
- Review admission procedures for all specialized programs to ensure greater equity of access.
- Utilize the findings of the Enhancing Equity Task Force to inform budget planning and the allocation of resources.
- Intentionally focus on a broad range of supports to ensure that all children are reading by the end of Grade 1.

This has been a challenging and sometimes uncomfortable journey, but with this discomfort has come the opportunity to learn and grow. The conversations that emerged have led us towards untapped resources, fresh ideas and new partnerships.



Policy

What is Our Equity Goal?

Ensuring procedures are in place at all levels of the system for developing, implementing and reviewing policies that promote equity and inclusion

How Have We Started To Achieve It?

- Reviewed the Equity Foundation Policy (P037) to ensure the Board's commitment to fairness, equity and inclusion are essential principles of the TDSB.
- Engaged our community in online and in-person public consultations on the draft Equity Foundation Policy.
- Conducted an environmental scan and started reviewing best practices of like organizations in advance of developing an Equity Assessment Tool to use in the formal policy review process.
- Revised Workplace Harassment Policy (P034) and conducted public consultation. The Board approved the revised policy – the Workplace Harassment Prevention Policy – and expect it to be launched June 2017

What Have We Learned?

Through the Enhancing Equity Task Force engagement process, we learned that there is a need for a clearer definition as well as an interpretation of the term equity – how equity applies to TDSB policies, programs and services, and how equity supports our shared commitment to improving outcomes for every student in every school. We have understood that based on historic patterns, we must explicitly address communities and students who the system has not yet been able to serve well. e.g. addressing Anti-Indigenous/Anti Black racism; the need to collect information on Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism which we will begin to collect this year.

What's Next?

- Finalize the Equity Foundation Policy (P037).
- Co-develop Equity Assessment Tool.
- Develop Operational Procedure to support the Workplace Harassment Policy (P034).



Budget

Budget

What is Our Equity Goal?

Aligning our resources with our equity commitments to support improved achievement and well-being for each and every student.

How Have We Started To Achieve It?

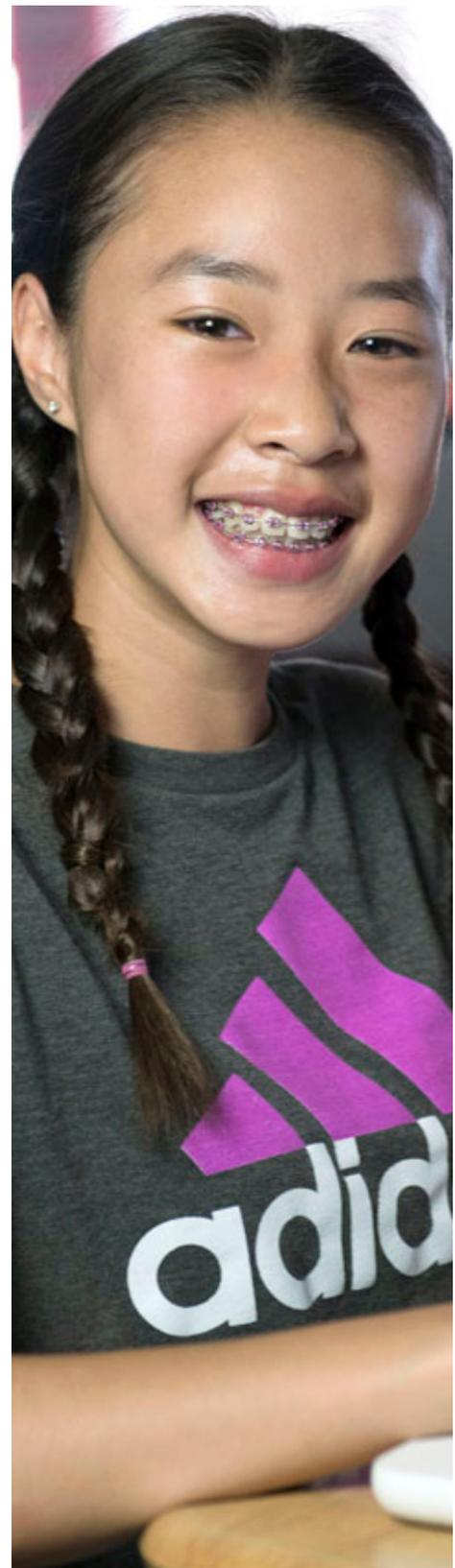
Engaged parents and community through the Enhancing Equity Task Force process and made recommendations that will address our equity commitments to support improved achievement and well-being for each and every student.

What Have We Learned?

Although the TDSB offers numerous programs and services, we heard from parents and families – especially those who live in under-served communities – that the Board needs to pay attention to how resources are allocated to support individual school communities. One size does not fit all and there needs to be a clear, context-responsive process that guides the budget process moving forward.

What's Next?

- Engage Trustees in budget discussion taking into account recommendations made by the Enhancing Equity Task Force.
- Use the Equity Assessment Tool as a basis for the allocation of human and financial resources.



Access and Secondary Program Review

Access and Secondary Program Review

What is Our Equity Goal?

- Increasing equity of access and opportunity for all students in all schools.
- Engaging student participation through the review process and reflecting student voice in programming decisions.

How Have We Started To Achieve It?

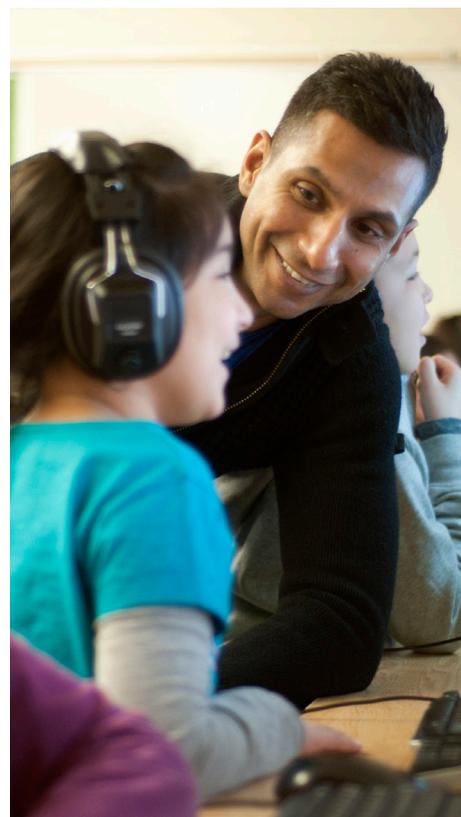
- Designed consultation format and developed guiding questions to engage students in a conversation about the Secondary Program Review which will determine the conditions required to create exemplary secondary school learning environments that provide: equity of access, engagement and inspiration, pathway planning that positions students for success and results in equity of outcomes and programs that are creative and innovative.
- Hosted four Student Voice Consultation Sessions – one in each Learning Centre – to understand the focus of the review and how students could engage their peers.
- Trained students to host their own Speak-Up Forum to broaden the outreach with secondary students.
- Initiated a year-long collaborative inquiry involving 16 schools to actively engage with each other and provide support around Delayed Pathways. This included learning first-hand from schools that have already successfully de-streamed their programs.

What Have We Learned?

We have deepened our understanding about the possibilities and potential for de-streaming – where all Grade 9 students take core courses at the Academic level – and are continuing to use this as an opportunity to understand what we can do as a system to support this.

Student Voice – Comments from Student Voice Consultation Sessions:

- Choice of Program - This ranges from choice of course content to method of delivery, students are asking for more comprehensive choices than what has traditionally been available. There was a focus on personal finance, skills that are immediately relevant in the lives of students at a young age.



Access and Secondary Program Review

- Quality of Instruction - We have heard many comments about the quality of instruction. Students also mentioned favoritism in class and some gender inequity; lack of differentiation that is meaningful; teacher seen as holder of knowledge and a gatekeeper to next level, but not necessarily a partner for students.
- Access to Opportunity - This includes physical access to all aspects of school and learning, and also access in terms of all students receiving the same opportunities, as opposed to what currently happens - only the “chosen few” are selected, leaving others out consistently.
- Focus on Equity- Students appreciate the recent focus on equity in schools, but want to see this go deeper and be more inclusive. Not enough has happened to get our schools into a truly equitable place, and they know it, and they want to know how to improve this.

What's Next?

- Review and implement changes to the admission procedures for all specialized schools/programs.
- Review access to French programs across the TDSB.
- Assess impact of the de-streaming initiative that is currently underway in a number of TDSB secondary schools through the Structured Pathways project.
- Partner with postsecondary institutions to expand Dual Credit programming in all our secondary schools.
- Disseminate report on Student Voice and confirm next steps.
- Report on Student Voice and program scan in every secondary school.



School Improvement Process

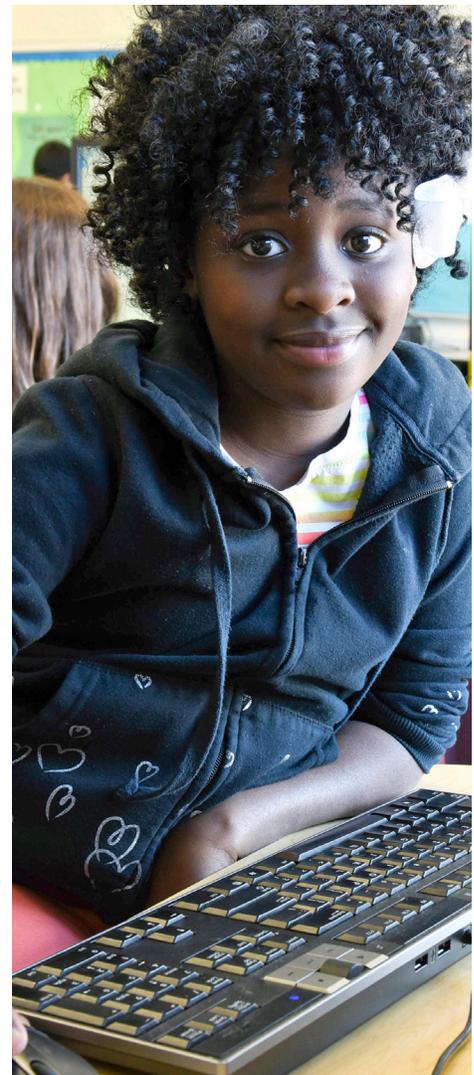
School Improvement Process

What is Our Equity Goal?

- Supporting leaders to provide coaching, facilitate learning and monitor progress.
- Building knowledge how to read, use and interpret data through an equity lens.
- Supporting all students with engaging learning opportunities to achieve global competencies and improve well-being.
- All students reading by the end of Grade 1.
- Set the global competencies as a foundation for deep learning. These competencies foster deep learning through engaging experiences that incorporate creativity, inquiry, entrepreneurship, collaboration, leadership, communication, global citizenship, character, critical thinking and problem solving.

How Have We Started To Achieve It?

- Developed and implementing TDSB Vision for Learning & Service.
- Expanded the number of learning coaches who work directly with teachers in schools for the purpose of improving learning and achievement.
- Supported system leaders through collaboration between Superintendents and Principals and Vice Principals to support school effectiveness work and lead key conversations.
- Introduced Inclusive Design which provides a comprehensive understanding of what Equity-focused school leadership can encompass.
- Implemented supports for deep learning through technology and global competency with the Digital Lead Learner strategy which is a Professional Learning Network of volunteer elementary and secondary teachers building educational technology capacity in each Learning Network through a sustainable professional learning model.
- Implemented/upgraded a new Wide Area Network to ensure equitable access to network resources.
- Strategically supported schools with Early Reading Coaches and Reading Recovery (in some schools) to bridge differences in reading outcomes for students by the end of Grade 1.
- Engaged Early Reading Coaches in professional discussion about literacy development and identity intersect and culturally relevant texts.
- Offering five Africentric and culturally responsive Pre-Kindergarten summer programs in July 2017.



School Improvement Process

What Have We Learned?

We recognize that schools are at different points along the equity and improvement continuum. As such, schools require different levels of support as they embark on the work of school improvement.

Principals have been quite eager to learn and go deeper with Inclusive Design as it relates to instruction and school climate. There is potential emerging in the model of coaches working directly with students and co-teaching with colleagues for an extended period.

Students respond with engagement, positivity and increased levels of achievement when presented with learning experiences that are authentic, global and rich in design. Teachers are interested in learning more about this approach to learning as demonstrated by their attendance at the Unleashing Learning conference.

What's Next?

- Establish a Collaborative Inquiry for schools from all Learning Centres to develop their capacity and understanding of Inclusive Design and serve as system models and possibilities to achieve equitable schooling outcomes for all students.
- Consistently use evidence in placing Early Reading Coaches in schools and monitoring impact: including monitoring the achievement of groups of children in each school. Intentionally focus on a range of supports to ensure all children are reading at level by the end of Grade 1 and continue to explore possible models for expansion in Summer 2018.
- Implement supports for deep learning through technology and global competency with the Digital Lead Learner strategy which is a Professional Learning Network of volunteer elementary and secondary teachers building educational technology capacity in each Learning Network through a sustainable professional learning model.
- Connect Learning Centres and schools with the broadest possible array of complementary services that support the achievement and well-being of students (human rights, gender-based violence prevention, caring and safe schools, social work, psychology, etc.) to more effectively connect and integrate their achievement, well-being and equity foci.
- Consistent with the principles of Growing Success (Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools), ensure that the assessment and evaluation of students occurs in a fair, transparent, equitable manner, and capitalizes on the interests, learning styles, needs, and experiences of our students.



Leadership Capacity Plan

Leadership Capacity Plan

What is Our Equity Goal?

- Building capacity of system leaders and of all staff within the TDSB will impact equity, responsiveness and engagement.
- Shifting from leadership-of-position to leadership-as-influence.
- Creating enhanced learning cultures.

How Have We Started To Achieve It?

- Developed Leadership Capacity Plan to focus on professional learning opportunities that will develop the collective leadership of the TDSB and outlined what leaders need to learn and how to support others in order to serve in an equitable and inclusive way.
- Enabled all staff to share their leadership and expertise to influence direction through various channels, including a system-wide survey inviting ideas, experiences and feedback.
- Concentrated on building capacity for all leaders through a variety of learning opportunities that focused on:
 - Listening to the voices of students, parents, communities and staff
 - Increasing understanding of global competencies and creating learning conditions that enable students to take ownership of their learning
 - Enhancing well-being of all students
- Committed to providing formal anti-racism and anti-oppression training to all TDSB staff across the Board, to address issues of power and privilege, confront bias, and eliminate barriers; actively working with education partners to develop and implement a training plan; and effectively implementing these learnings to address the over-representation of specific groups of students being suspended and expelled.
- Trained Business and Operations Managers on Service Excellence to increase responsiveness.

What Have We Learned?

Through professional learning, we have started to build staff capacity and to address issues of power and privilege while confronting bias and eliminating barriers. With a focus on Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression we understand that there is a need to realign current structures to support a proactive Human Rights approach to the work we are doing.

What's Next?

- Assess our progress and determine the impact of our actions – How well is each school achieving its improvement goals Achievement, Equity and Well-being?
- Begin implementing plan for all TDSB staff to participate in Anti-Oppression/Equity learning over the next three years.
- Identify key staff for priority learning to support the current focus including, but not limited to, guidance counsellors, student success leads, Grade 8/9 teachers around transitions pathways and Special Education Resource Teams (SERTS).



Inclusion and Special Education

Inclusion And Special Education

What is Our Equity Goal?

Ensuring that every student in every school is welcomed and included within the most enabling learning environment.

How Have We Started To Achieve It?

- Focused on improving communication materials.
- Started exploring remodel of Home School Program (HSP) by connecting with staff and community about the upcoming changes and sharing best practices around program.
- Developed and conducted ongoing training sessions for staff throughout the year, including: IPRC Chair Sessions; Student with Special Needs: Management of Risk of Injury Behaviours; Supporting Students with Autism in the Regular Classroom and in CBRM; IEP content and IST/SST Process.
- Initiated a collaborative inquiry with schools to actively engage and provide support around re-imagining models of support for students with identified learning needs.



What Have We Learned?

We have listened to voices of parents and families and know more needs to be done to improve services in the area of Special Education. Through the Learning Centre Strategy, we are finding that issues are being resolved in a timely manner and that schools with central supports are responding effectively to parent concerns.

What's Next?

- Continue collaboration with SEAC and families to improve learning, achievement and well-being for students with special education needs
- Engage in a process of understanding how our current IPRC/IEP processes are not/supporting our students to be successful and to re-construct these processes keeping this learning in mind.
- Work more closely with parents so that practices connected to Special Education (e.g. Identification, Placement and Review Committee and Individual Education Plans) create consistency and allow for authentic parent engagement and involvement. This will include ensuring an opportunity for parents to provide feedback regarding their IPRC experience, in order to improve our processes.
- Deliver site-based, classroom-embedded professional learning connected to Special Education, including both student identification and program delivery.
- Continue to remodel the Home School Program with an anti-racist, anti-oppression stance and an emphasis on greater inclusion, to address the over-representation of Racialized and Indigenous students in Special Education.
- Implement a system-wide professional learning plan, to build capacity with a goal to improve learning, achievement and well-being for students with special education.

Employment Equity

Employment Equity

What is Our Equity Goal?

Committing to the development, implementation and maintenance of employment and promotion policies, practices and procedures that result in and sustain a workforce that, at all levels, reflects, understands and responds to our diverse population.

How Have We Started To Achieve It?

- Developed staff census and employee wellness survey scheduled for fall 2017.
- Recommended a leadership and mentoring program for Racialized and Indigenous staff.
- Reviewed the current Principal & Vice Principal hiring process from an equity perspective
- Developed “look-fors” to support Equity as a Leadership Capacity which will support further accountability across the system.
- Engaged Senior Team in specific professional development to deepen understanding of hiring with an equity lens.
- Launched a new selection process format for Central Administrator positions to identify people who exemplify the leadership attributes – including the ability to identify and remove systemic barriers to students’ achievement and well-being – necessary to move the system forward

What Have We Learned?

We must be intentional as we work across the system to improve hiring practices – to make sure our processes are free of systematic barriers.

What’s Next?

- Develop promotion processes that are aligned with the Framework to promote equity and inclusion.
- Review hiring processes and ensure Equity “look-fors” are embedded in all processes.
- Establish a complementary tool to support the Ontario Leadership Framework with an equity lens - to build capacity and support accountability.



Service Excellence

Service Excellence

Equity is an important component in creating the conditions for improving service excellence by ensuring that our working environments are equitable and safe and that everyone is respected and valued.

The following expectations for equity are included in the draft Leadership and Team Development section of the Service Excellence Workbook:

- Working to ensure that decisions affecting staff and clients are free from personal and system bias, e.g., based on gender, culture, race, ability, religion, socio-economic status.
- Reflecting diversity in client-based activities and communications to create full and easy access.
- Ensuring the Board's Equity policies are fully implemented in all department workplaces including, but not limited to, Accessibility Frameworks, Human Rights, Equity Foundation, and Employment Equity; Occupational Health and Safety, Respectful Learning and Working Environment and Workplace Harassment.
- Ensuring staff complete the Board's Equity training, including AODA and AODA for Customer Service training and Compliance and Mandatory training.

