



## Toronto District School Board

Office of the Chair – 5050 Yonge Street; Toronto, ON, M2N-5N8  
Tel: 416-397-2572; Fax: 416-397-3114; E-mail: [mari.rutka@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:mari.rutka@tdsb.on.ca);

### **The TDSB Supports Equity and Inclusion**

The position of the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) regarding matters of equity and inclusion is clear and long-standing. Our 1999 Equity Foundation Statement declares that, as a board, we “value the contribution of all members of our diverse community” and commit to ensuring fairness, equity and inclusion in our policies, programs, operations and practices for everyone in our system, regardless of “race, colour, culture, ethnicity, linguistic origin, socio-economic class, age, ancestry, nationality, place of origin, religion, faith, sex, gender, sexual orientation, family status or marital status.” Our 2004 Human Rights Policy reaffirms this and states that, “every student, employee, trustee and community member has the right to learn and work in an environment free of discrimination and harassment.”

We are committed to creating learning environments where people of all gender identities, gender expressions and sexual orientations feel empowered and supported. We are proud to be the first school board in Canada with a Gender-based Violence Prevention (GBVP) Office that works to promote healthy relationships and safe environments in our schools. Through this office, as well as through Gay Straight Alliances in our high schools, specialized programs, such as Triangle, Safe and Positive Spaces, professional learning opportunities and many other programs and initiatives, we work continuously to create TDSB schools and workplaces that are safe, accepting and free from discrimination. This work continues.

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees freedom of expression to all Canadians and the TDSB’s own Code of Conduct for Trustees says that we accept the right of every board member to formulate and express his or her personal opinion. Anyone is welcome at any time to contact individual trustees regarding their opinions. In the past few days, I have been in touch with my colleagues regarding their opinions over remarks that have been seen by many as hurtful to transgendered people and as unsupportive of the good work done by our board. We firmly distance ourselves from remarks or actions that hurt or discriminate against our students, our staff or our communities. We support the work and policies of our board.

Yours truly

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mari Rutka'.

Mari Rutka  
Chair, Toronto District School Board

