

### Indigenous Education

Aanii, boozhoo, gakina gweya dinawaymaagmnidoowak. Miigwechwendam gaye e-gakina bimaadizijik, miigwech eshkawgimikwe aki'ing, miigwech giizis, miinwaa dibik giizis, miigwech noodin, giizhigoong, miinwaa ji-animikiikag, miigwech nibi waaboo, miigwech anungoohns, ogii-miizhiyaang wesiinyag, beneshiiyag, amoodejik, miinwaa nbiishing aa-yaa-jig, Miigwech biidaabung, Nimkii anupowaagun, nimkii bineshii, minwaa waasnoodo. Miigwech gizhemanidoo. Miigwech, Miigwech, Miigwech, Miigwech. Nahaaw, aambe goshkoozin! Gidaa-naakiimewe, ne'iikaanagaanaa.

(Beedahbin Peltier- Wikwemikong First Nation)

I see you, how things have come together here in this place, inclusively to everyone, and all of your relations - past, present and future. The influencers of energy and spirit, the ancestors foresaw the potential of today. We are grateful for our families, grateful for Mother Earth, and the land, grateful for the sun and the wind, the air, sky, and the thunders that come; the water and abilities of water and the stars. Thank you for bringing together the animals, birds, animals that crawl, and animals in the water. We thank the keepers of the four directions. Thank you to the universal energy, from the smallest particles to our Milky Way. Our perpetual commitment to reciprocity. Ok, let's go and ignite our fires/hearts! We will uphold our responsibilities to self, community, and creation for all of our relations and the ones to come.

#### 1.0 Rationale

- 1.1 The Durham District School Board adopts this policy in recognition that Indigenous Peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations, which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information.
- 1.2 The Durham District School Board adopts the following as a foundational statement of our commitment to Indigenous peoples: "shall take effective measures, in consultation and cooperation with the Indigenous peoples concerned, to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination and to promote tolerance, understanding and good relations among Indigenous peoples and all other segments of society." (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), Article 15)

#### 2.0 Objective

- 2.1 This policy is informed by UNDRIP and is informed by and compliant with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Ontario Education Act, the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Anti-Racism Directorate's Data Standards and the DDSB's Guidelines and Procedures for the Accommodation of Creed in Schools: An Inclusive Approach.
- 2.2 The District recognizes that the education system has its foundation in Eurocentric thinking, assimilation practices and genocidal laws that have historically marginalized Indigenous peoples and continue to disproportionately and negatively affect Indigenous students.
- 2.3 The District acknowledges that learning about Indigenous knowledge systems, worldviews, truths, histories and contributions benefits all students in all schools and must be present in all curriculum areas.

- 2.4 The District recognizes all stakeholders have shared roles and responsibilities for supporting and not infringing Indigenous rights.
- 2.5 This policy is adopted to support Indigenous rights within the context of the statements and commitments made in the preceding paragraphs.

### 3.0 Definitions

In this policy,

- 3.1 **Board:** The Board of Trustees for the DDSB.
- 3.2 **District:** the corporate entity of the Durham District School Board.
- 3.3 **Staff:** any individual who is employed by the DDSB.
- 3.4 **Indigenous Peoples:** Indigenous has become the more widely accepted general term to refer to First Nations, Métis and Inuit people.
- 3.5 **Colonialism:** Colonialism is a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another. Settler colonialism — such as in the case of Canada — is the unique process where the colonizing population does not leave the territory, asserts ongoing sovereignty to the land, actively seeks to assimilate the Indigenous populations and extinguish their laws, cultures, traditions and ties to the land.
- 3.6 **Anti-Colonial:** intentional and critical analysis of structures, processes and decision making to identify, challenge and address or change (and not perpetuate) the legacies and ongoing harmful impacts of colonialism.
- 3.7 **Cultural Appropriation-**is the adoption of an element or elements of one culture or identity, knowingly or unknowingly, by members of another culture or identity without engaging or consulting with the community, which can often result in diminishing or trivializing significant cultural or spiritual meaningful practices/traditions, and can be discriminatory and racist. For Indigenous peoples in Canada, cultural appropriation is rooted in colonization and ongoing oppression.
- 3.8 **Giikendaaswin-** is an Anishinaabe word to describe Anishinaabe worldview; knowledge, information, and the synthesis of personal teachings that everything is connected.
- 3.9 **Indigenous Rights:** derive from Indigenous peoples political, economic and social structures and from their cultures, spiritual traditions, histories and philosophies, especially their rights to their lands, territories and resources.
- 3.10 **Indigenous Education Advisory Circle:** an advisory committee of various stakeholders from Indigenous educators and administrators to Indigenous community members, parents and students that collaborate and advise the Board on Indigenous education initiatives and programs throughout the DDSB.

### 4.0 Policy

#### *Ancestral Lands*

- 4.1 The District recognizes that it is situated on the ancestral and treaty land of Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation and the Chippewas of Georgina Island, two Anishinaabek Ojibwe Nations. The Durham District School Board 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 land treaty lands that we teach, learn and live. These Nations hold legal and specific rights in their respective territories. This area has been and continues to be home for Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous peoples.

The District is committed to fostering and maintaining healthy reciprocal relationships with urban First Nations, Métis and Inuit community members, Métis Nation of Ontario, Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation and the Anishinabek Education System.

#### *Distinct Rights and Consultation*

- 4.2 The District recognizes that Indigenous rights are distinct.
- 4.3 These distinct Indigenous rights are recognized in numerous international covenants and conventions and also in pre- and post-confederation treaties.
- 4.4 The District also recognizes that Indigenous Peoples are distinct from equity-seeking groups in that they are self-determining Nations with inherent rights, laws, and institutions. In the exercise of their rights, they should be free from racism and discrimination of any kind.
- 4.5 Indigenous staff and students shall not be subject to actions with the aim or effect of depriving them of their distinct rights. The District is committed to providing services, workplaces and learning environments that center Indigenous rights, human rights and equity and that are welcoming, respectful, safe, inclusive, equitable and free from oppression, discrimination, racism, harassment and harm.
- 4.6 The District is committed to upholding Indigenous and Inherent Rights in a manner that prioritizes ethical conduct and healthy relationships with Indigenous community members. In this regard, the District is committed to meaningful consultation and engagement with Indigenous peoples in accord with the expectations of local Indigenous community members on matters related to Indigenous education policy and procedure development, amendment and/or implementation and on curriculum and programs or other policy or systemic issues impacting Indigenous peoples or their rights as confirmed in this Policy. Local Indigenous community members could include Indigenous parents or parent councils, Indigenous policy consultants, Indigenous employees, Indigenous lawyers, Indigenous human rights specialists, Indigenous Elders, Indigenous activists, and Indigenous scholars.
- 4.7 The District will ensure that Indigenous community voice is present in board governance, strategic direction and priorities and policy setting.

#### *School Climate and Curriculum*

- 4.8 Indigenous Peoples have the right to the dignity that comes with acknowledgement of the diversity of nations, laws, cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations and this shall be appropriately reflected in curriculum, programs and public information.
- 4.9 There is a shared responsibility between the District and local Indigenous community members to promote and protect the rights of Indigenous students, families and staff and to ensure the maintenance of a respectful, safe and positive school climate and the actions that support *Giikendaaswin*.

- 4.10 Indigenous students have the right to an education free from racism and discrimination of any kind and to learning experiences that align with and promote Giikendaaswin.
- 4.11 Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) education delivered within the DDSB is to comply with legislative requirements, the terms of this policy and shall support the District's commitment to Indigenous rights, human rights, anti-oppression, anti-Indigenous racism and non-discrimination.
- 4.12 Discrimination and harassment such as, but not limited to, cultural appropriation, harmful narratives, stereotypes and racial slurs are unacceptable and are incompatible with District values and expectations.
- 4.13 The District shall value and present Indigenous expertise and knowledge systems as equal to, and on par with, Eurocentric knowledges, in accordance with terms of any procedure adopted under this Policy.

#### *Anti-Colonialism*

- 4.14 The District is committed to understanding the ongoing legacies of colonialism which continue to negatively impact the social, legal, economic, cultural and political lives of Indigenous Peoples and their lands, including Indigenous peoples' right to education without discrimination.
- 4.15 The District recognizes that uninterrupted existing structures replicate or perpetuate colonial and discriminatory structures, processes and decision making and negatively affect Indigenous rights and, therefore, that the District must begin to engage in anti-colonial actions to address these structures. In this regard, the District adopts UNDRIP as a guiding document to inform the creation of District policies, and procedures. The District is committed to acting upon, reconciling and being accountable to Indigenous Peoples in addressing the impacts of colonialism.

#### *Self-Identification*

- 4.16 In response to the Ministry of Education's Ontario First Nation, Metis and Inuit Education Policy Framework (2007), the DDSB shall provide students 18 years or older and all parents/guardians of Indigenous students the opportunity to voluntary, confidential self-identification of First Nation, Métis and Inuit ancestry.
- 4.17 The District shall establish and maintain a strictly voluntary process to collect, aggregate, and report confidential Indigenous self-identification data in accord with applicable privacy legislation and best industry practices to maintain privacy and confidentiality.
- 4.18 Any such data shall only be used to identify and remove barriers experienced by Indigenous students and families, inform anti-colonial practices and improve Indigenous education programs within the District. The District shall respectfully utilize relevant voluntary, confidential self-identification data to develop, implement, and evaluate responsive programming that increases Indigenous student engagement, well-being, and achievement of Indigenous students within the District.

#### *Implementation*

- 4.19 Implementation of this policy will be an ongoing commitment of the Director and delegates and the Board, within the scope of their respective responsibilities, that will involve amongst other things:
- Examining existing colonial structures and supporting anti-colonial efforts;
  - Monitoring and assessing organizational compliance with this policy;

- Putting in place appropriate and sustainable organizational structures, resources and expertise to support the successful implementation of this policy and related procedures;
- Revising or removing policies, procedures and practices that conflict with this policy and adopting and implementing new policies, procedures and practices that proactively promote and support Indigenous and inherent Rights and anti-discrimination; and
- Engaging in ongoing learning and training in understanding the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the deep impacts of colonialism and how it continues today.

## 5.0 Evaluation

- 5.1 This policy is to be reviewed and updated as required but at a minimum of five years <sup>[NM1]</sup> or as may be requested by the local First Nations (Mississaugas of Scugog Island and Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation) or the Indigenous Advisory Circle.

## 6.0 Reference Documents

### 6.1 Policies

- [Equity and Inclusion](#)
- [Consultative Process](#)
- [Voluntary, Confidential First Nation, Métis and Inuit Student Self-Identification Policy](#)

### 6.2 Procedures

- [Equity and Inclusion](#)
- [Positive School Climate](#)
- [Land Acknowledgement](#)
- [Opening and Closing Exercises](#)
- [Voluntary, Confidential First Nation, Métis and Inuit Student Self-Identification Policy](#)
- [Learning Resource Materials Selection](#)

### 6.3 Other Documents

- Anishinabek Education System
- Anishinabek Education System Master Agreement
- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- Charter of the United Nations
- The Ontario Education Act
- Constitution Act
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action
- Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework
- Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework: Implementation Plan
- Ontario Human Rights Commission: Policy on preventing discrimination based on creed
- Building Bridges to Success for First Nation, Métis and Inuit Students – Developing Policies for Voluntary, Confidential Aboriginal Student Self-Identification: Successful Practices for Ontario School Boards
- Strengthening Our Learning Journey. Third Progress Report on the Implementation of the Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework
- Durham District School Board's Guidelines and Procedures for the Accommodation Creed in Schools: An Inclusive Approach
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (UNCRC) Constitution Act
- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (CCRF) (section 15, 35)

- Ontario Human Rights Code
- United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)
- Pre and post-confederation treaties as so entered into

**Appendix:**

None

**Effective Date**

2021-09-21

**Amended/Reviewed**

YYYY-MM-DD