

EQUITY AND INCLUSION ADVISORY GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The purpose of the Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group (EIAG) is to provide informed **advice and guidance** to the Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) in developing inclusive policies and practices and safe, caring and inclusive school environments for students, staff, parents and community.

Recommendations from the EIAG will be aligned with the Board's 6 strategic directions which include Student Achievement and Success for All, Fostering Wellness and Well Being, Embracing Diversity and Inclusion, Engaging Students, Families, Staff and Communities, Promoting Forward Thinking and Championing Quality Education.

As with all committees of the WRDSB, members of the EIAG are required to operate in accordance with existing Board policies and procedures, Ministry of Education directions for school boards, as well as align with other relevant legislation, including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

For the purpose of this document, diversity means the presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society. Diverse groups include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, citizenship, gender, gender identity or expression, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, or socio-economic status.

Mandates of the EIAG:

1. To consider the recommendations of the *Equity Audit (2007)* report, the eight *Areas of Focus* contained within *Ontario's Equity and Inclusion Education Strategy (2009)*, and the WRDSB Equity Plan and provide input in determining priorities and strategies for systemic implementation;
2. To provide feedback to the WRDSB on issues related to equity, inclusion and diversity from broad community perspectives and trends affecting the community;
3. To participate in advising the WRDSB with respect to the development of more inclusive, representative and developmentally appropriate curriculum and programming reflective of diverse groups;
4. To assist in determining strategies to engage students, parents and members of the community to more adequately reflect the diversity within schools;

Roles and Responsibilities

1. To represent their respective agency, organization or committee and to consider the well-being and interests of the organization, stakeholders and the public;
2. To advise on and guide policies and programs;

3. To ensure the accountability and transparency of the school board and aligned with the WRDSB Equity and Inclusion Policy (Board Policy 1008);
4. Demonstrate respect for all EIAG members including Co-Chairs, invited contributors or WRDSB staff and the broader community.
5. Demonstrate professionalism, transparency, accountability and respect timelines in completing any tasks or projects undertaken by Group;
6. Conforms with all relevant legislation, policies, guidelines;
7. Work in conjunction with stakeholder groups and/or staff of the Waterloo Region District School Board;
8. Contributes in a meaningful manner, offering constructive and respectful comments to committee members , staff of the Waterloo Region District School Board and members of the community;
9. Respects due process and the authority of the Co-Chairs or presiding Interim Chair;
10. Respect and give fair consideration to diverse and opposing viewpoints;
11. To operate and advise in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code and Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms where every member of the Advisory Group has the right to freedom from discrimination or harassment.
12. When deemed appropriate, members shall share information from the EIAG to their respective agency, organization or committee.
13. Responsible for seeking input from members of their respective agency, organization or committee to guide the work of the EIAG;
14. May recommend public presentations to the Co-Chairs with the understanding that all presentations should be focused on the broader issues related to equity and diversity, not a specific incident or a specific individual;
15. Should make every effort to attend scheduled meetings. When conflicts or unforeseen circumstances arise, members should, whenever possible, solicit an alternate to attend the meeting for their respective agency, organization or committee.
16. Members are responsible for creating an annual report and through the Assistant (to) Superintendent of Learning Services - Equity and Inclusion, the annual report would be presented to the Board of Trustees and/or Education Council.

Role of the Co-Chair:

1. To act as the chief executive officer of the Advisory Group;
2. To preside over monthly Advisory Group meetings so that business can be carried out efficiently and effectively;
3. To provide leadership to the Advisory Group;
4. To develop the agenda for each meeting along with the Equity Officer, with input from the committee. Committee members must submit the agenda items two weeks prior to the meeting. The meeting notice and agenda will be electronically distributed one week in advance of each meeting;

5. Will invite any staff required as resource to the Advisory Group in advance of the meeting, through the Assistant (to) Superintendent of Learning Services – Equity and Inclusion;
6. Will ensure through management of the agenda that all voices have an opportunity to be heard;
7. Shall receive all requests regarding public presentations and determine in consultation with EIAG members that the specific presentation relates to the mandate of the committee, not a specific incident or individual;
8. In consultation with the membership, the Co-Chairs will start the process of selecting a potential candidate to take on the role of Co-Chair. The Co-Chair will be responsible for providing mentorship to potential candidate(s) to ensure the continuation and consistency of the Advisory Group. Succession planning should be considered where possible.
9. The term of office for the Chair is 1 year with an option to renew up to 3 years.
10. In unforeseen circumstances, when Co-Chairs have not been elected or of both Co-Chairs leave the Group, the Advisory Group may choose to elect an interim Chairperson, until a new Chairperson is recruited and elected to the position. The Equity Officer will assume the role of Chairperson until an interim Chairperson or Co-Chairs are elected.

Secretary

1. A member of the EIAG will be selected to act as secretary for the group;
2. The Secretary will take meeting notes.

EIAG Membership

Community Members

1. Membership of the EIAG must reflect the diversity of the communities in Waterloo Region, and provide input to the WRDSB that incorporates the views of this diverse population;
2. Membership of the Advisory Group should include a wide range of community members representing organizations, agencies and committees serving our diverse community.
3. Community members to have active membership within their respective organizations;
4. Community members should form a majority of the members on the EIAG
5. Membership may include representation from Ministry mandated committees, designated by the Board (eg. Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC))
6. Community organizations must commit to a minimum 2 year term as part of the EIAG by ensuring a member of their respective organization is present during each EIAG meeting.
7. Community organization with absent membership for more than 4 consecutive meetings may be asked to resign from the EIAG. This is to keep in accordance with the continuity of the group, while minimizing disruption and impediment of the group to move forward.

Trustees and Staff Members

Membership of the EIAG should include representation from the Waterloo Region District School Board and its staff. Recommended membership should include:

1. One Trustee and one alternate Trustee;
2. The Assistant (to) Superintendent of Learning Services – Equity and Inclusion;
3. The Equity and Inclusion Officers;
4. Other Board staff may be requested to attend to act as resource to the EIAG.

Recruitment of New Membership

1. Community membership may be sought through a process of mailing invitations to community agencies, groups, and organizations across the region.
2. Community representation may be sought through specific contact with interested organizations and agencies in the interest of seeking the broadest representation from the community possible. Community representation needs to reflect the diversity of our Region.
3. To sustain the integrity and appropriate commitment to the mandate and structure of the EIAG, the candidate will participate in an orientation session led by Waterloo Region District School Board staff, prior to being recommended for inclusion as a standing member of the Advisory Group. This process supports candidates having a more comprehensive understanding of the roles and related responsibilities of being a member of the Advisory Group, and ultimately determines if the individual is prepared to provide such contributions to the group.
4. New community membership should be reviewed and considered semi-annually during EIAG meetings to ensure the committee has the broadest representation from the community.

Code of Conduct

All member of the Advisory Group are highly valued for their contribution to shaping and aligning WRDSB Policies, Procedures and Guidelines and emerging Ministry of Education directions or initiatives. In order to support collaborative dialogue and provide an advisory lens to matters relating to equity and inclusion, each member is responsible for maintaining a respectful environment which does not undermine the Ontario Human Rights Code where every member has the right to freedom from discrimination or harassment because of ancestry, culture, ethnicity, citizenship, gender, gender identity or expression, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, or socio-economic status.

Furthermore, members must be provided the opportunity to engage in dialogue with other members or guests, while being respectful of converging ideas and insights. No member of the EIAG should be undervalued or made to feel that their contribution or perspective is less important. Members that undermine the ability for the Advisory Group and/or sub-committees of the EIAG to move forward in making progress shall be subjected to the following process:

Contravention of the Code of the Conduct

Process:

A request for an investigation of a complaint that a member of the Advisory Group has contravened the Code of Conduct shall be:

1. Made in writing, setting out reasonable and probable grounds for the allegation where a member has contravened the Code of Conduct ;
2. The Co-Chairs will take the allegations into consideration and will follow the following process;
 - a) The Co-Chairs will respectfully engage in a dialogue with the member and request that such conduct no longer continue;
 - b) If matter is unresolved between Co-Chairs and the member, the matter may be elevated to include the Assistant (to) Superintendent of Learning Services – Equity and Inclusion and the member’s advocate, should they choose to have one;
 - c) If matter is unresolved between the Assistant (to) Superintendent of Learning Services – Equity and Inclusion and the member (and their advocate), the matter may be elevated to include the Executive Superintendent and or a designate for the Executive Superintendent or staff may approach the organization, agency or committee that the member is representing;
 - d) If matter at level c) fails to bring forth a suitable solution, the Co-Chairs may elect to introduce a third party to provide an alternate resolution ie. Restorative Justice, Community Justice Initiatives;
 - e) If the member refuses to engage at the level c) and or does not find a resolution, the member may choose to resign.
 - f) A Member with more than two outstanding complaints of misconduct according to the EIAG’s Code of Conduct will be asked to resign.