



# Indigenous Sovereignty, Equity & Inclusion and Human Rights at the WRDSB

WRAPSC Presentation

January 11, 2022

# Territorial Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the land on which WRDSB sites are situated are the lands traditionally used by the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe, and Chononton people. We also acknowledge the enduring presence and deep traditional knowledge, laws, and philosophies of the Indigenous people with whom we share this land today.



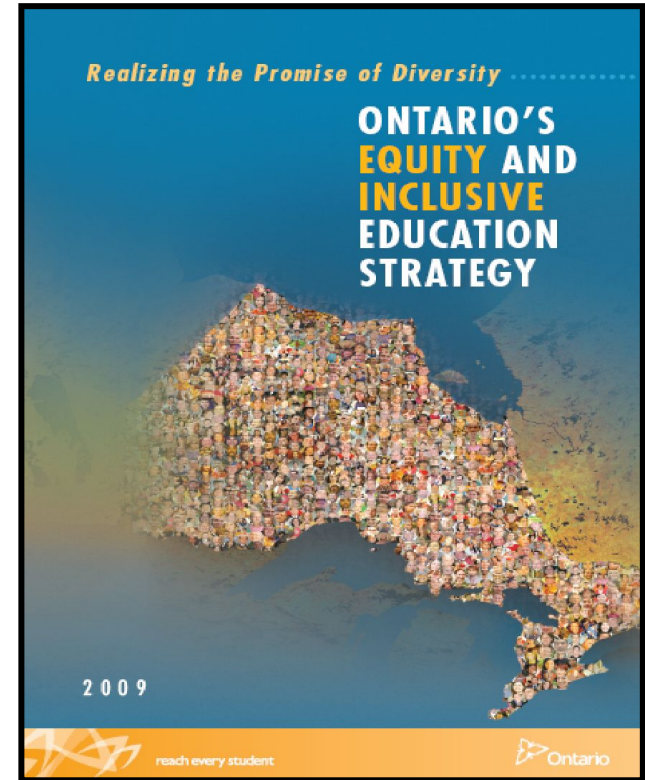
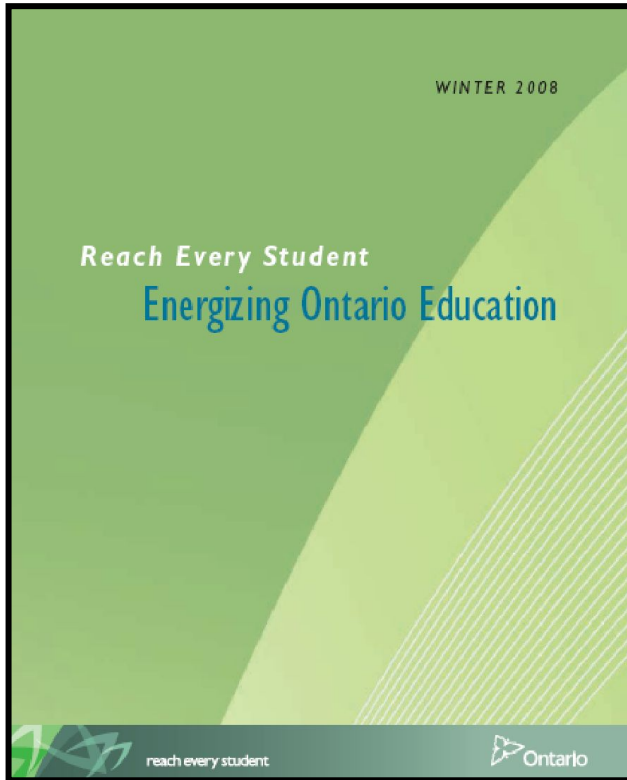
# Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms & Ontario Human Rights Code

The Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) is committed to meeting its obligation under the ***Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*** and the ***Ontario Human Rights Code*** by providing inclusive, safe and caring schools and workplaces that respect the rights of every individual. Every student, employee, trustee, parent and community member has the right to learn, work and interact in an environment free of discrimination and harassment.



# System Improvement

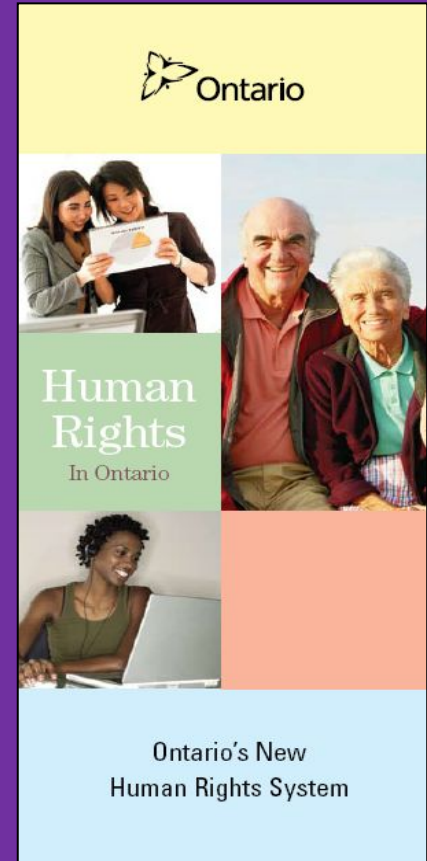
## Equity of Access/Outcomes



**Addressing persistent barriers in education enables each person to fully and freely take part in society.**

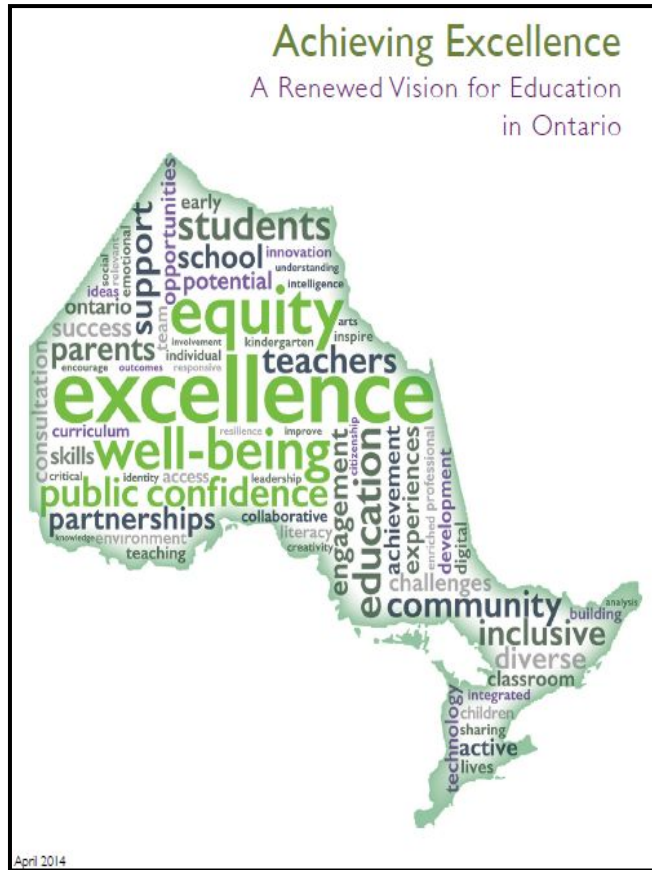
*Strategic Direction:* Promote and strengthen a human rights culture in Ontario that encompasses both human rights and responsibilities, with a special focus on educating children and youth and addressing systemic discrimination in our education system.

# Education



# System Improvement

## Equity of Access/Outcomes



Ontario's Education  
Equity Action Plan

2017

Ontario  
EDUCATION BOARD

# ONTARIO'S EQUITY ACTION PLAN 2017

Systemic barriers are caused by embedded biases in policies, practices and processes, and may result in differential treatment, and are often the result of doing things the way they have always been done.

Regardless of the reason for them or their intentions, their impact can be detrimental to many.

Equity Action Plan, 2017

# Board Improvement and Equity Plan 2021

Along with the *Board Action Plan on Indigenous Education*, the BIEP increases accountability and standardizes commitments for advancing human rights and equity across the education system.



# Board Improvement and Equity Plan (BIEP)

- **Sets out province wide goals and outcome measures in 5 priority areas:**



1) Achievement



2) Human Rights and Equity



3) Mental Health, Well-Being and Engagement



4) Transitions and Pathways

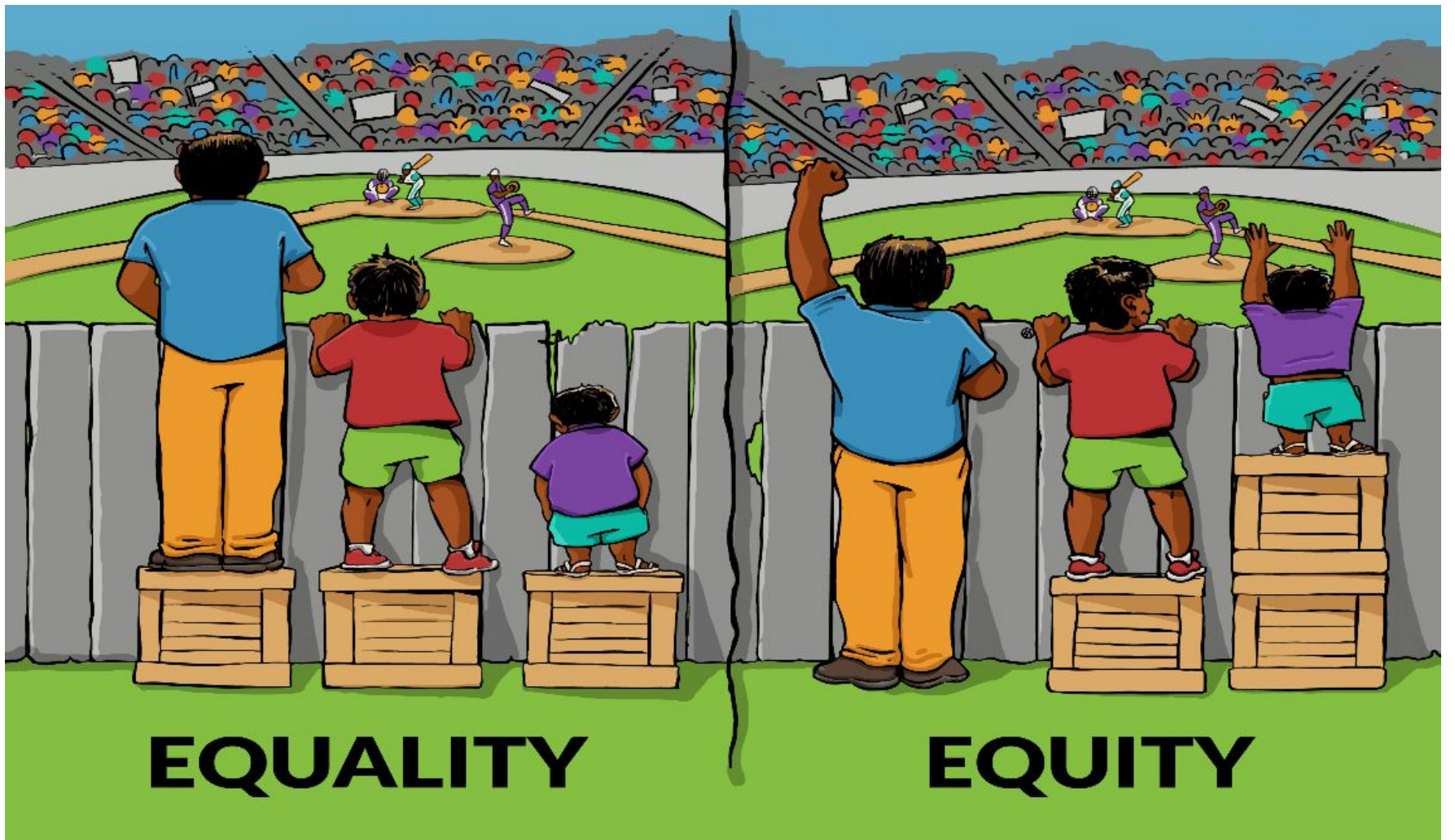


5) Learning Recovery & Renewal

# **Transformational Change Needs to Occur To Ensure that Students' Identity No Longer Predicts Their Outcomes**

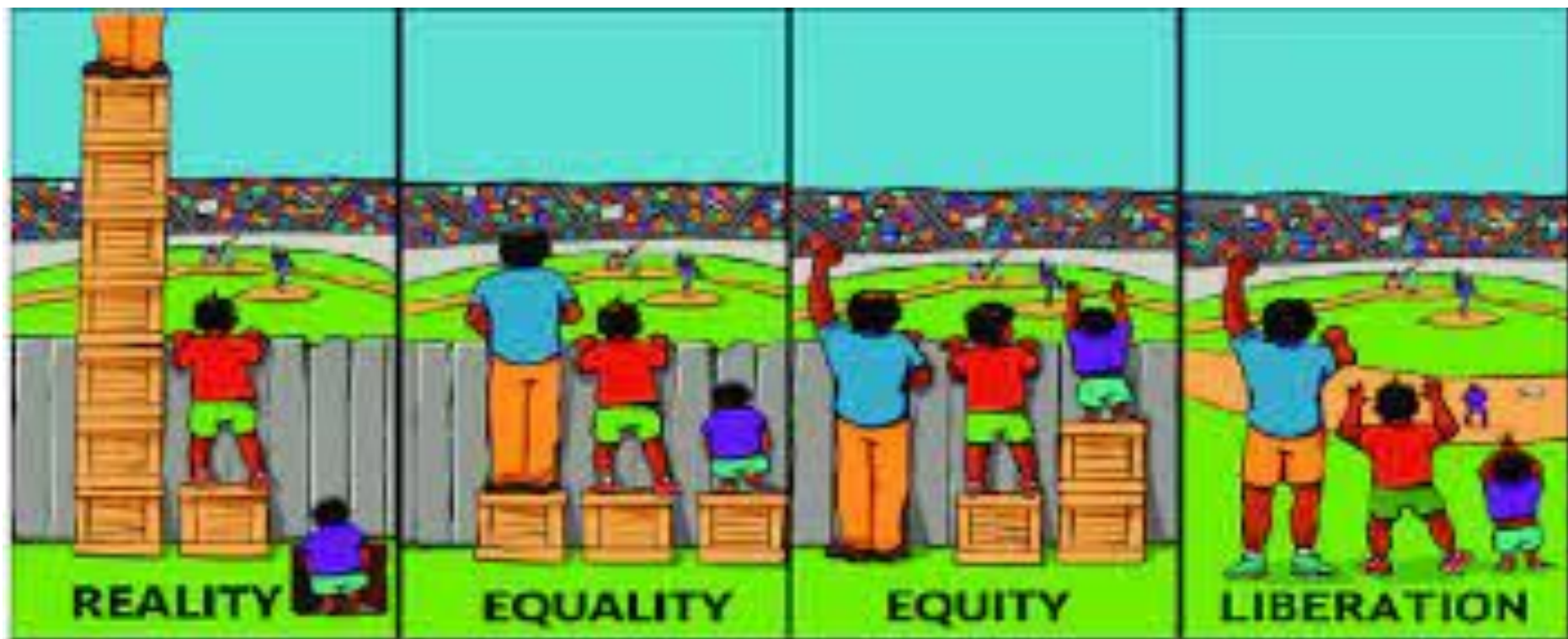
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**EQUALITY**

**EQUITY**



# EQUITY IS **NOT**:

- simple, immediate solutions
- neutrality
- changing students, culture, or behavior
- treating everyone the same
- embracing colour-blindness
- celebrating diversity (only)
- being nice and kind (only)
- focusing on INTENTIONS
- the easy way
- the status quo
- an add-on
- a fad
- an endpoint or place you arrive



# EQUITY IS:

- Redistribution of resources
- purposeful attention to SYSTEMS of power: racism, sexism, classism, ableism, heterosexism
- a LENS: a way of seeing imbalances of POWER
- recognizing even subtle forms of bias, inequity, and discrimination
- responding to and redressing all forms of bias, inequity, and discrimination
- applicable to EVERY subject
- focus on fixing *systems*, not *kids*
- critical self-reflection; personal—not just at school/work
- maintaining high expectations for ALL students by considering factors and inequities outside of our control
- focus on IMPACT



# Role of School Council in Creating Equitable Schools

- Disrupt our traditional views and expectations
  - Video resource being developed
- Understanding the difference between charity and equity
  - A parable
- Ask reflective questions to ensure equitable<sup>15</sup> outcomes



# School Council Membership and Meetings:

Diversity asks, “Who’s in the room?”

Equity responds: “Who is trying to get in the room but can’t? Whose presence in the room is under constant threat of erasure?”<sup>16</sup>





Inclusion asks, “Has everyone’s ideas been heard?”

Social Justice responds, “Whose ideas won’t be taken as seriously because they aren’t in the majority?”

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Inclusion asks, “Is this environment safe for everyone to feel like they belong?”

Social Justice challenges, “Whose safety is being sacrificed and minimized to allow others to be comfortable maintaining stereotypical and dehumanizing views?”

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# Acknowledging Special Days:

Diversity asks, “Have we celebrated everyone’s days of significance?”

Social Justice challenges, “Whose special days will be given primacy? Who will be tokenized? And who will be erased?”



# Activities, Celebrations and Events:

Inclusion asks, “Can everyone participate?”

Social Justice challenges, “What barriers will prevent people from participating? What assumptions are we making?”

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Diversity celebrates increases in numbers of marginalized groups and incremental growth.

*Equity celebrates reductions in harm, revisions to abusive systems and increases in supports for people who have been discriminated against.*

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Inclusion celebrates awards for initiatives and credits itself for having a diverse group of people.

*Social Justice celebrates getting rid of practices and policies that were having disparate impacts on marginalized groups.*



Diversity is a FACT

Equity is an ACT

Inclusion does little to address the significant barriers that marginalized people face in even making it into the very spaces that purport inclusive practices.



Social justice is about distributing resources fairly and treating all students equitably so that they feel safe and secure—physically and psychologically.





The pandemic is highlighting for us gross inequities that have existed for a long time...



# Equity of Opportunity, Access and Outcomes

The Waterloo Region District School Board is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment which actively promotes and supports human rights, where equity of opportunity, access and outcomes are realized. The Board recognizes the value of:

- each and every student;
- a strong public education system;
- a partnership of students, schools, family and community;
- the uniqueness and diversity of our students and our community;
- the commitment and skills of our staff;
- equity, innovation, accountability and accessibility
- learning and working environments that are safe, nurturing, positive and respectful.

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# Questions?

