



**Limestone**  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



# Equity Action Plan 2020-2023 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition



Kingston  
workplace  
inclusion  
charter



Kingston  
Charte de  
l'inclusion

## Land Acknowledgement

The Limestone District School Board is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee. We acknowledge their enduring presence on this land, as well as the presence of Metis, Inuit, and other First Nations from across Turtle Island. We honour their cultures and celebrate their commitment to this land.

The Limestone District School Board is dedicated to continuing to encourage and elevate all voices through Equity, Inclusion and Reconciliation. Through ongoing learning and action, individual and collective experiences of staff and students are shared, understood, and valued so that everyone sees themselves in Limestone and feels a sense of belonging and connection.

## Message from the Director and Chair of the Board

The Limestone District School Board is committed to an equitable and inclusive school climate that ensures all students, staff, and members of the broader school community feel safe, comfortable, and accepted. We want everyone who learns, works, or volunteers in Limestone to value diversity, demonstrate respect for others, and commit to establishing a just, caring society. We know that diversity enriches the educational and employment experience of everyone.

Our three-year *Equity Action Plan* demonstrates our commitment to ensure equity at all levels of our system, as we work together to embrace and foster engaging and innovative learning where everyone achieves success and well-being. The plan is modeled on Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and *Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan (2017)* and encompasses school and classroom, leadership and governance, and human resource practices, data collection integration and reporting, and organizational culture change in our school communities.

Schools and classrooms must be places where everyone values diversity, respects each other, and where students' lived experiences are valued and celebrated. We must foster safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments where students see themselves reflected in the curriculum, their learning, and their school environment. Schools must engage and serve all students and staff and reflect the diversity of everyone.

To do this important work, we must better understand the backgrounds, experiences, and needs of the school community so that we can identify potential barriers or gaps and determine how to eliminate discriminatory biases in classes and schools. Equity must be the lens through which we embrace and lead cultural change in our school communities. Our goal remains for everyone to see themselves in Limestone.



Krishna Burra  
Director of Education



Suzanne Ruttan  
Chair, Board of Trustees

## Introduction

The Ontario Human Rights Code protects LDSB students and staff from discrimination and harassment on the basis of citizenship, race, place of origin, ethnic origin, colour, ancestry, disability, age, creed, sex, family status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. Despite these protections, as a school district, we acknowledge that oppression and discrimination still exist within our systems, structures, policies, and practices. It shows up as racism and other forms of oppression and more specifically, as, but not limited to, anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism; anti-Asian racism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, and anti-Sikhism; classism, ableism; sexism, transphobia, heterosexism, and homophobia.

The Limestone District School Board's Equity Action Plan continues to build on the work begun through Ontario's Equity Action Plan (2017). The Plan focuses on the four key priority areas identified in Ontario's Equity Action Plan:

- School and Classroom Practices.
- Leadership, Governance and Human Resource Practices.
- Positive Culture and Well-being.
- Data Collection, Integration and Reporting.

The Actions proposed in this plan have emerged from the following data:

- Student voice (i.e., Student Voice Days, Census Focus Groups).
- Equity Team feedback.
- Staff and administrator feedback.
- School Climate Survey data.
- Community feedback and correspondence.
- Trustee feedback.
- LDSB Indigenous Team feedback.

The Guiding Principles for equity and inclusive education are based on Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (2009):

- Building upon a foundation of excellence.
- Meeting individual needs.
- Identifying and eliminating barriers.
- Promoting a sense of belonging that ensure all members of the school community feel safe, comfortable and accepted.
- Involving the broader community.
- Building on and enhancing previous and existing initiatives.
- High Expectations for all students.
- Demonstrating commitment and follow through throughout the system.
- Eliminating discrimination by centering human rights.

### Expected Outcomes

- Identify, understand, and challenge biases, systemic barriers, and discriminatory practices.
- Support positive learning and workplace environments where all students and staff feel respected, supported and seen.
- Build and foster diverse and inclusive community partnerships and engagements.
- Communicate accountability regarding our collective commitment to equity and communicate results to the public.

## Monitoring & Progress

- Similar to the LDSB Strategic Plan, the Equity Action Plan has adopted the stoplight system for monitoring and sharing progress as follows:
  - Green reflects goal is on target
  - Yellow reflects goal is making progress
  - Red reflects goal requires further attention











## Leadership and Governance

LDSB is committed to creating safe, inclusive, and engaging learning and work environments for all staff and students. We are committed to equity and inclusion for all and to upholding and centering human rights, by continuing to review existing structures, policies, procedures, programs, and practices that disadvantage racialized and marginalized groups within our organization.

Areas of Focus	Timelines	Status
Hire an Elementary Equity Consultant to support curriculum and staff development in incorporating anti-racism learning in the Arts, Social Studies, History and Geography).	2021 – 2022	<span style="color: green;">●</span>
Create a leadership development and succession planning process that is equity focused.	2021 - 2023	<span style="color: green;">●</span>
Update the Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement to include a greater focus and actionable items related to equity.	2020 - 2023	<span style="color: red;">●</span>
Commit dedicated time at each school staff meeting to engage in collective learning and doing, in respect to Indigenous Decolonization and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion practices.	2020 - 2023	<span style="color: red;">●</span>
Schools will utilize equity, diversity, inclusion, and Indigenous resources to increase their own learning and further commitment to reconciliation.	2020 - 2023	<span style="color: orange;">●</span>
Review Administrative Procedures to ensure they adhere to principles of human rights, equity, inclusion, and fair process, beginning with AP 350, AP 352, AP 400, AP 405 and AP 406.	2020 - 2023	<span style="color: orange;">●</span>
Create an Inclusive Language Guide that informs and supports staff and students in identifying and using language that is based in anti-oppression, anti-racism, and is equity focused.	2022-2023	<span style="color: red;">●</span>
Create an Administrative Procedure that supports transgender and gender non-conforming students and staff.	2021 - 2023	<span style="color: red;">●</span>
Create and distribute a monthly electronic Limestone newsletter that focuses on building capacity in equity and human rights across the district.	2020 - 2023	<span style="color: green;">●</span>
Create a consistent system of collecting and tracking human rights incidents/complaints for students and staff, as well as guidelines and protocols for responding and supporting affected individuals.	2021 - 2022	<span style="color: orange;">●</span>

## Organizational Culture Change





Creating organizational culture change requires input at every level of an organization. With the goal of creating a more equitable, safe, and inclusive learning and work environment, it is important to have the voices and input of stakeholders. The centering of anti-oppression, equity, and human rights in every operational goal and across all departments and stakeholders is critical to entrenching the idea that it is everyone's work, and all bear responsibility for examining their own practices, biases, and patterns.

Areas of focus	Timelines	Status
Establish an LDSB Community Equity Advisory Committee to support the Limestone District School Board (LDSB) in identifying and eliminating barriers to an equitable and inclusive environment for students, staff, and the broader community, and determining strategies for systemic implementation of LDSB's Equity and Action Plan.	2022 - 2023	
Establish a racialized student advisory group to represent the student voice in Limestone.	2020 - 2023	
Establish a 2SLGBTQ+ School Staff Collective.	2021 - 2023	
Establish several staff affinity groups, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Black, Indigenous and Racialized Staff</li> <li>Staff living with Disabilities</li> <li>2SLGBTQ+ Staff</li> </ul>	2021 - 2023	
Establish a Black family and community advisory group.	2020 – 2021	
Review all present system student representation structures and processes through an equity and anti-oppression lens and explore different models of representation and student voice that best reflects diverse student population.	2020 - 2021	
Build staff capacity through learning opportunities on human rights and equity topics in response to the needs of students and staff, with a focus on normalizing the language of inequity (e.g., anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, Heteronormativity, Transphobia, Homophobia, anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous Racism, anti-Oppression, ableism, accessibility, and White Supremacy).	2020 - 2023	
Work to ensure every elementary and secondary school in Limestone has gender-neutral and accessible washrooms for staff and students.	2020 - 2023	
Recognize and demonstrate sensitivity towards dates of cultural and religious significance.	2020 - 2023	
Review communication tools to ensure they are accessible to all Limestone community members (website, newsletters, etc.).	2021 - 2023	

## School and Classroom Practices

Our schools are committed to removing systemic barriers to ensure that school and classroom practices reflect and respond to the diversity of students and staff. We will continue to review existing structures, policies, programs, and practices within our school communities.

Areas of Focus	Timelines	Status
Support ongoing learning for staff and students regarding gender identity by updating Limestone's Guideline to Supporting Transgender-Spectrum and/or Gender Non-Conforming Students.	2020 - 2023	●
Build staff capacity and understanding, in terms of accessing community resources, in support of addressing socio-economic inequities and the impact it has on student well-being and achievement.	2022 - 2023	●
Implement the vision and goals of a Grade 9 destreamed program which include increased educator capacity, and increased student engagement, achievement, and well-being.	2021 - 2023	●
Implement key findings and recommendations from Right to Read (Ontario Human Rights Commission).	2022 - 2023	●
Develop and implement a Text and Resource Selection Guide to support staff in reviewing, auditing, and selecting texts and resources for classroom, school and online libraries using an anti-oppression, anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, and equity lens.	2020 - 2023	●
Review and critically analyze the selection of literature used in elementary and secondary classrooms to include an increased number of authors representing intersectional identities.	2020 - 2023	●
Support staff in understanding, developing, and implementing a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach to create a flexible learning environment that emphasizes multiple means of representation, multiple means of expression, and multiple means of engagement.	2020 - 2023	●
Provide professional learning and resources to support staff in understanding and implementing Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy.	2020 - 2023	●
Establish a trained Equity (non-administrator) Champion and Truth and Reconciliation Lead in each school, who would be responsible for disseminating information to staff, supporting administration in leading the learning and work of equity and anti-racism at the school and supports the implementation of the Equity Action Plan at their site.	2021 - 2023	●
Require each school to establish an Equity and Well-being Goal as part of our system wide inquiry.	2020 - 2023	●

Ensure K-12 Assessment and Evaluation processes are explored through an equity lens.	2021 - 2023	
Provide professional learning for all K-12 staff that are directly involved with pathways and career guidance, such as SST's, LPS, Student Success, Experiential Learning, and Guidance Teachers, to maximize opportunities for all students.	2021 - 2023	
Ensure the consistent use of LDSB data collection tools to track and measure equity actions on the school level, including but not limited to School Climate Survey, Human Rights Incident/Complaints Form, Workplace Census and Sense of Belonging Survey.	2021 - 2023	
Incorporate a school tracking and reporting system addressing site-specific inequities.	2021 - 2023	

## Human Resource Practices




LDSB is committed to promoting and building working and learning environments that are equitable, diverse, and inclusive. Recruitment, selection, and promotion processes must therefore ensure fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, identifying and eliminating barriers that prevent full participation of some groups. A commitment to diversity and equity can be achieved through concerted efforts to ensure the inclusion of diverse and underrepresented populations, valuing, respecting and equally supporting all individuals through the recruitment process.

As a public board of education, it is important that recruitment efforts reach a broad, diversified applicant pool in order to broaden employee demographics, providing opportunities for all students to see themselves in Limestone.

It is equally important that our efforts are sustained post recruitment so that we may retain highly qualified, engaged, and diversified employees who together help to achieve the strategic direction of the Board.

## Recruitment and Selection

In order to determine what actions are necessary to promote a recruitment strategy that supports and advances equity, diversity and inclusion, a review of existing recruitment procedures and practices has been initiated with a view to ensuring that any unintended systemic barriers are identified and addressed.

Areas of Focus	Timelines	Status
Review Administrative Procedure AP 400 – Recruitment & Selection to ensure alignment with Ministry PPM 165 Teacher Hiring Practices.	2020 - 2021	
Ensure that all components of the hiring process are barrier-free to create an equitable and inclusive experience for all candidates seeking employment with Limestone.	2020 - 2023	
Develop recruitment outreach to diverse communities by exploring partnerships with local, post secondary educational institutions.	2020 - 2023	



Explore ways to increase the number of racially diverse applicants selected for interviews through diverse job boards and other means to attract a diversified applicant pool.	2020 - 2023	●
Create a standard job posting template demonstrating LDSB's commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion that is unique and reflective of the Board.	2020 - 2022	●
Review all postings and procedures to ensure the use of gender-neutral language.	2020 - 2021	●
Include the ability to voluntarily self-identify as part of the application process.	2020	●
Analyse recruitment data, including number of diverse applications, number selected to participate in the process, and number of candidates participating from diverse backgrounds who are successful in the process.	2022 - 2023	●
Develop selection criteria for all levels of system and school leadership that ensure competencies in equity, anti-oppression, and anti-racism practices.	2021 - 2023	●
Provide anti-oppression professional learning for HR staff and system leaders to foster equitable, diverse, and inclusive recruitment and selection processes.	2021 - 2023	●

## Retention

To actively engage and retain a diverse workforce that feels valued, respected, and included, it is prudent to understand how all current employees feel and whether they truly “see themselves in Limestone.” This can be accomplished through the Spring 2022 LDSB Workforce Census & Belonging Survey.

In addition, we will undertake the following with the goal of creating equitable and inclusive working environments for all employees:

Areas of Focus	Timelines	Status
Review all Human Resources Administrative Procedures with a focus on identifying systemic barriers and revising procedures using an equity and inclusion framework to ensure accessible, equitable and inclusive language and practices.	2020 - 2023	●
Develop partnership with KEYS (Kingston Employment & Youth Services) to advance and support Equity, Diversity and Inclusion initiatives.	2021 - 2022	●
In collaboration with LDSB stakeholders, develop the Workforce Census & Belonging Survey to determine the composition of our employees.	2021 - 2022	●

Analyse data collected from WCSB to create baseline with the goal of using the data to inform and monitor school and system progress towards equity and well-being goals.	2022 - 2023	●
Develop or source and implement appropriate equity, diversity and inclusion education, awareness and training for Human Resources staff, Education Centre and other support staff across the district.	2020 - 2023	●
Embed equity, diversity, and inclusion into all new employee orientations.	2022 - 2023	●
Develop and implement an LDSB Exit Survey for all employees who resign or retire from the organization that includes questions pertaining to equity, inclusion, and sense of belonging in Limestone.	2022	●
Provide mentorship, support, and leadership/succession planning opportunities designed for Black, Indigenous & racialized, 2SLGBTIQ+, people living with disabilities, and potentially other marginalized staff populations.	2022 - 2023	●
Work with Employee Assistance Program providers to promote diversity among counsellors.	2020 - 2023	●
Share processes for accessing Human Rights supports (health and wellness, accommodations) regularly, in staff communications.	2020 - 2023	●

## Data Collection, Integration & Reporting

Within each of the aforementioned areas of focus, data will be collected and analysed to demonstrate progress towards our goals and shared with Trustees, staff, and broader school communities.

Data may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Student census data
- School climate survey data
- See Yourself in Limestone Workforce Census & Belonging Survey
- Human Rights reporting tool for both students and staff
- Student and staff Voice
- Community Voice
- Graduation rates
- Pathways' data
- Course selection and credit accumulation
- EQAO
- Board and school learning plans

While responsibilities have been assigned to different departments for accountability purposes, it is essential that all equity actions are the result of the collective and collaborative work of all LDSB employees. At the end of 2020 – 2023 Equity Action Plan cycle, the Equity Advisory Committee will review the progress made towards achieving the goals outlined herein. Outcomes from the previous school year will be shared on an annual basis with Trustees at the start of each school year.

## Conclusion

The Limestone District School Board upholds the principles of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, *the Constitution Act (1982)*, the Ontario Human Rights Code, and as outlined in Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (2009) and the Ontario Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 (2009). The Board and its staff are committed to the elimination of all types of discrimination and discriminatory barriers that may exist whether because of commission or omission. The Board recognizes that equity of opportunity and equity of access to the full range of programs, the delivery of services, and resources are critical to the achievement of successful educational and social outcomes for staff and students.