

Challenge (In)Equity!



Faith Accommodations

January 27th 2011 OESC Conference

Suzanne Muir - HDSB

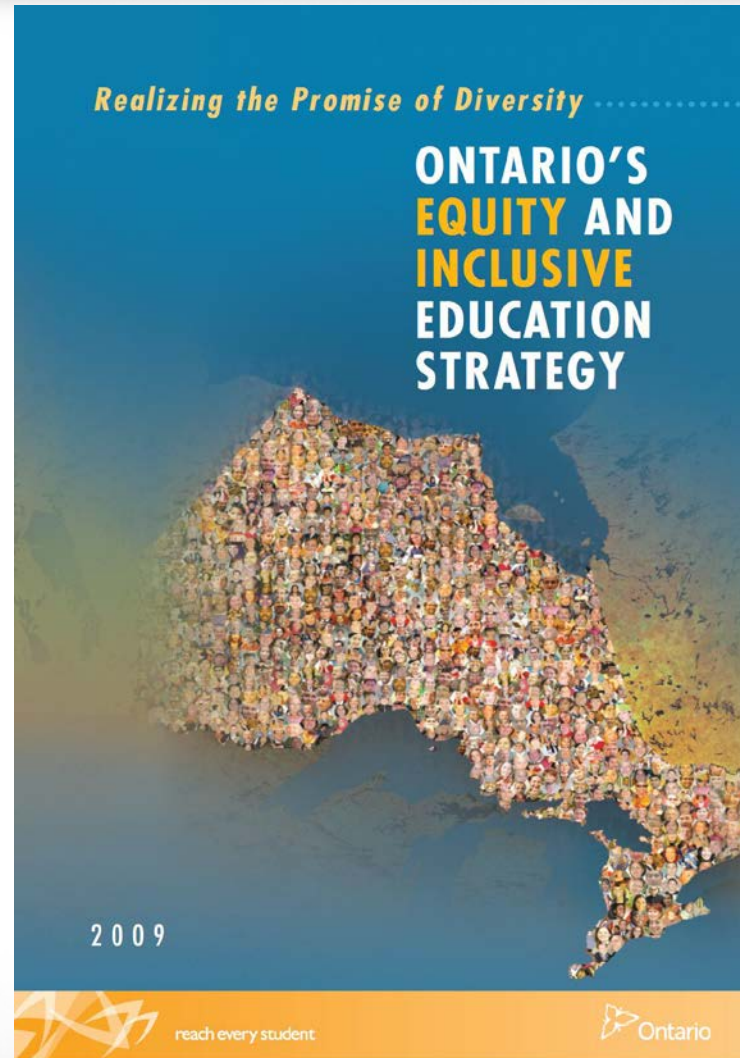
Chris D'souza – York University

Aboriginal Perspectives

- *Honour the Aboriginal peoples who lived here before us and still exist within and around our communities

Ontario Ministry of Education

EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION STRATEGY

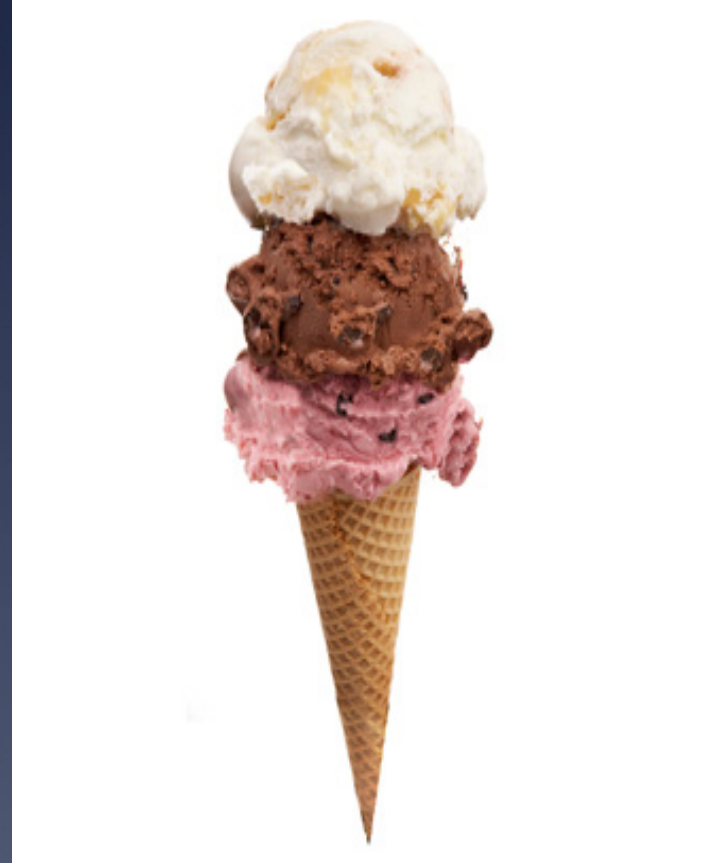


Brief Outline

- * Part One- Establish a Relationship
- * Part Two: Equity Strategy requirements
- * Part Three: Faith Accommodations

Where are we at?

- 1) Just starting out
- 2) On our way
- 3) Experienced



ICE BREAKER

- * Match your accommodations card
- * With a faith group/groups card



Equity and Diversity:

- * Does not pertain to race and ethnicity only:
- * It encompasses gender, sexual orientation, socio-economics, disability, faith and the intersection of these identities

BILLINGSLEY ACADEMY



Citytv

Part Two

- * So why an Equity Strategy and New PPM?
- * Diversity: The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation and socio-economic status.
- * (Realizing the Promise of Diversity - Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009)

Common sources of systemic discrimination in Education

- * Formal Curriculum
- * Hidden Curriculum:
- * Teacher's personal values
- * Eurocentrism
- * Physical Environment
- * Omission
- *

XENOPHOBIA

*Is it ethical to believe existing stereotypes that still prevail around "difference"?



Immigration

- * In the 1950s, 85% of immigrants were European by birth
- * By the mid 1980s immigrants born in Europe slipped to 30%
- * Now it is about 15%



In the past 20 years

- * We have moved from a Judeo-Christian, Eurocentric demographic of immigrants to:
- * Multi-Faith groups from Latin and South America, Africa and the Asian Continent
- * Hence a focus on Faith Accommodation in the New PPM

- By 2017 non-whites will outnumber the white population in most major cities in Canada

Immigration patterns have changed

- 290,000 immigrants come to Canada each year: 80% are non-white
- 40% of them settle in Toronto,
- The 35% settle in Vancouver and Montreal



Multi-Faith Community

- Even though people in our community practice different faiths we share four things in common:
 - 1. Loved/respected
 - 2. Healthy
 - 3. Successful
 - 4. Belief in a Karmic Principle
- Our Karmic principle is “Do unto others and you would have others do unto you”.

All Faiths Have a Principle of Karma

- * Hinduism
- * Buddhism
- * Sikhism
- * Islam
- * Judaism
- * Christianity
- * Ba'hai
- * Aboriginal Spirituality
- * Zoroastrianism



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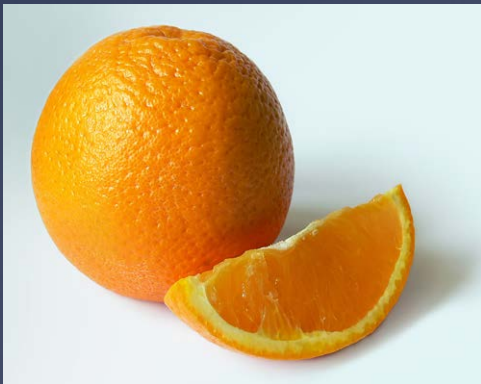
Part III – Faith Accommodations

- * Every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to services, goods and facilities, without discrimination because of Race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, Creed, sex, age, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or handicap. (OHRC)

Faith Accommodation

- Schools as public institutions have the duty to accommodate a faith observance for students, staff, parents and volunteers.

There are limits to accommodation but those do not include inconvenience, cost, or disagreeing with the observance.



Creed

- * Professed system and confession of faith, including both belief and observances of worship
- * Sincere belief
- * All are protected from harassment/ discrimination including agnostics/ atheists
- * Does not include: secular, moral, ethical, political beliefs. Does not extend to religions that incite hatred or violence against other groups

Undue Hardship

- * Accommodation will be provided to the point of undue hardship, A determination regarding undue hardship will be based on an assessment of costs, outside sources of funding, and health and safety. It will be based on objective evidence.
- * It should be made only with the approval of the Board of Trustees.
- * Next best accommodation should be offered
- * Phasing in of accommodation over time (in case of cost)
- *

Equity Strategy

- * Each board is expected to create guidelines on Religious Accommodation in consultation with their community.
- * Areas of accommodation:
 - * School opening and closing exercises;
 - * Leave of Absence for Religious Holy Days;
 - * Prayer;
 - * Dietary requirements;
 - * Fasting;
 - * Religious dress;
 - * Modesty requirements in physical education; and
 - * Participation in daily activities and curriculum;
 - * Distribution of faith-based literature;
 - * Faith-based student groups
 - * Support for Faith-based Charities (HDSB)

Staff Need Learning/Training

- * All staff need opportunities to learn and discuss
- * Facilities – building of new schools (multi-purpose rooms, washrooms, change rooms)
- * School staff including non-teaching staff



Student Identity Formation

- * Faith as social capital
- * Students who feel they have to hide a part of their identity in order to come to school may experience anxiety, anger, fear or a sense of isolation.
- * If we facilitate open and appropriate discussions about faith – students are less likely become radicalized.
- * Every student needs to feel that they are safe at school and that they belong as their authentic self.

In partners:

- * Choose one of the accommodations from our energizer activity today – or one that is currently happening in your board/school.
- * Discuss with a partner:
 - * A) How could this be accommodated?
 - * B) What are potential challenges to this accommodation?



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- * I am recognized by the Ontario Human Rights Commission
- * Workshops on Creating Inclusive Environments for Law Enforcement, Healthcare as well

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Brief History of the Current Reality

Gender Variance

- * Over half of ALL species on the planet do not follow a gender binary construct
- * (Evolutions Rainbow)
- * 1/3 of all fish
- * Over half of all invertebrates
- * State in India has a third gender category on all official documents (T)

LGBTQQIAA

- * Lesbian
- * Gay
- * Bi-sexual
- * Transsexual
- * Transgendered
- * Two-spirited
- * Queer
- * Questioning
- * Inter-sex (1 in 250 people: both genitalia)
- * Asexual
- * Ally

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Equity Summit Group

- * Now 26 school boards across the province in conjunction with AMENO
- * Dialogue with the Ministry of Education
- * Represented the Collaborative at the Equity Roundtable: Resulting in the Equity Strategy released April 6th, 2009
- * Ministry has also created an Inclusive Schooling Branch

Equity Institute

- * Unlearn and Diverse City Strategies:
- * Two Day Institute: Building Equitable Organizations
- * Mid May: Friday-Sunday In Collingwood

