

# **REPORT TO COMMITTEE**

## **COMPILATION OF ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION POLICY ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

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Calgary Catholic Teachers'  
**ATA Local 55**

ATA Local 55 DEHR Committee

Compilation of ATA Policy on Diversity, Equity and Human Rights

**From: *Administrative and Educational Policy (2023)***

- 1.3.5.1 The Association offers leadership-development opportunities to encourage members of all gender identities and expressions and from diverse backgrounds to apply for senior staff positions or to run for office at the local level or on Provincial Executive Council. [2009, 2020]
- 1.3.5.2 The Association believes that employment equity is a positive process leading to equal opportunities in education and employment, and so it endorses the concept of equity in employment for all people without discrimination. [2006, 2020]
- 2.1.0.4 The domains of an integrated curriculum should foster the cognitive, social, emotional and physical well-being of students. [1971, 2019]
- 23.2.1.3 The Association takes stands on issues affecting student learning. [1977, 2023]
- 6.1.0.3 Diversity is an asset in school communities. [2003, 2022]
- 6.1.0.4 Teaching must be free of discriminatory practices. [1995, 2022]
- 6.1.0.5 To achieve the goal of inclusion, teachers require adequate supports. [2019, 2022]
- 6.2.1.1 An inclusive school has a culture that
  - 1. is safe and caring;
  - 2. welcomes and respects the diversity, equity and human rights of all students and teachers;
  - 3. exhibits the values of cooperation, trust, sharing, respect, responsibility and acceptance; and
  - 4. is committed to achieving racial harmony, gender equity, the eradication of poverty, peace, the prevention of violence and a respect for differences [2003, 2022]
- 6.2.1.2 An inclusive school has an approach to learning that
  - 1. fosters the intellectual, social, physical, emotional and spiritual development of each child;
  - 2. allows all students to experience success and meet their potential;
  - 3. provides students with a broad range of educational experiences that reflect the diversity of the community;
  - 4. uses inclusive curriculum and assessment practices;
  - 5. recognizes that diversity is a strength and provides enriched learning opportunities;
  - 6. encourages students to become active citizens; and
  - 7. recognizes the importance of Indigenous education and global education. [2003, 2022]
- 6.2.1.3 An inclusive school has an approach to professional development that
  - 1. encourages teachers to engage in reflective practice and research
  - 2. helps teachers be responsive to the diversity of students in their classrooms;
  - 3. emphasizes how social class and power relationships can breed sexism, racism and other forms of marginalization; and
  - 4. includes opportunities for teachers to work collaboratively with other teachers and professionals. [2003, 2022]

- 6.2.4.9 Institutions should incorporate into their teacher preparation programs curricula and instructional strategies to help teachers address, in age-appropriate ways, the topics of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. [2007, 2022]
- 6.2.14.6 The Government of Alberta should strengthen legislation
  - 1. supporting the establishment and operation of gay–straight alliances, queer–straight alliances or similar organizations;
  - 2. prohibiting anyone from disclosing a student’s membership or participation in the organization without the student’s explicit prior consent;
  - 3. confirming that the student or students who sought permission to establish the organization have the right to determine the final operational name of that organization;
  - 4. confirming that student members and teacher advisors have the right to determine the purpose, activities, projects and undertakings of the organization;
  - 5. protecting leaders and teachers who helped create or operate the organization from employment discrimination or sanctions, formal or informal, as a result of activities related to the organization; and
  - 6. affirming that denominational schools, while having the right to require a declaration of faith as a condition of hiring or enrolment, are thereafter prohibited from discriminating on the basis of any protected ground, including sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. [2015, 2022]
- 6.2.14.7 School authorities should develop policies and procedures that permit students to change all gender-identifying elements of their official records. [2018, 2022]
- 6.2.14.8 School authorities should protect every student from the unwanted disclosure of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. [2018, 2022]
- 6.2.14.9 School authorities should provide inclusive education and responsiveness training for staff regarding the creation of safe, caring and welcoming environments for people of all sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions. [2019, 2022]
- 6.2.14.10 School authorities have the responsibility to ensure the formation of student-led gay–straight alliances immediately upon request of a student. [2022, 2023]
- 6.2.2.6 The College of Alberta School Superintendents should collaborate with the Association to incorporate specific language to address antiracism and antioppression in school authority policies and administrative procedures beyond diversity and inclusion policies. [2021, 2022]
- 23.1.0.1 The Association speaks on behalf of the educational interests of all children in Alberta. [1982, 2023]
- 2.1.0.1 All children in a public education system have the right to an education that will develop their individual potentials.[1963, 2019]
- 2.1.0.2 Basic to education are learning experiences that help students to become knowledgeable, self-directed, responsible individuals who are able to form healthy social relationships and become engaged, contributing members of a complex, changing democratic society. [1971, 2019]
- 2.1.0.3 The mission of public education is to....
  - 3. prepare students to become active, contributing citizens in a democratic society. [1998, 2019]
- 2.2.2.8 The Government of Alberta should revise the Health and Life Skills and the Career and Life Management Programs of Study at all grade levels to include learning outcomes and age-appropriate resources to address the concepts of sexual consent, sexual harassment and sexual exploitation. [2012, 2019]
- 2.2.2.9 The Government of Alberta should fund existing and new programs and services to help young people better understand the concepts of sexual consent, sexual exploitation, sexual assault and sexual harassment. [2012, 2019]

- 2.2.2.17 The Government of Alberta should ensure that kindergarten to Grade 12 curricula include specific age-appropriate learning outcomes that address concepts related to gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, LGBTQ2S+ perspectives and historical events, including relevant Alberta legal cases. [2021, 2022]
- 23.1.0.3 Teachers exercise their political responsibilities and rights as free citizens in a democratic society.[1963, 2023]
- 24.1.0.1 The Association respects diversity, which involves
  - 1. adhering to beliefs and practices that demonstrate acceptance;
  - 2. understanding, accepting and respecting the differences among people and their unique circumstances;
  - 3. treating differences as positive attributes around which to build educational experiences; and
  - 4. recognizing that people are complex and that different aspects of their identity intersect. [2003, 2023]
- 2.2.10.1 Certificated counsellors and/or health professionals should be available to provide students with accurate information, support and advice on human sexuality and social health issues. [1983, 2019]
- 24.1.0.2 The Association is committed to equity, which involves
  - 1. treating all people with fairness and justice,
  - 2. ensuring that each person has an equitable opportunity to reach their full potential and
  - 3 ensuring that oppressed and equity-seeking groups are included and treated fairly. [2003, 2023]
- 24.1.0.3 The Association respects human rights, which involves
  - 1. recognizing the equal and inalienable rights and responsibilities of all people to live in a free, just and peaceful society without regard to race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, physical characteristics, disability, marital status, family status, age, ancestry, place of origin, place of residence, socioeconomic background or linguistic background; and
  - 2. recognizing the inherent dignity of all people and ensuring that this recognition is enshrined in public policy. [2003, 2023]
- 24.1.0.4 The Association is committed to eliminating barriers that prevent people from participating fully in education and in society and, as a result, opposes all discrimination based on race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, physical characteristics, disability, marital status, family status, age, ancestry, place of origin, place of residence, socioeconomic background and linguistic background. [1980, 2023]
- 24.2.7.1 The Government of Alberta, in collaboration with education partners, should develop research-based strategies,policies and practices to ensure that the educational system, in all its aspects, promotes gender equity.[1997, 2023]
- 24.2.7.2 Schools should promote gender equity by
  - 1. encouraging students to participate in educational programs regardless of their gender,
  - 2. ensuring that responsibilities are not delegated on the basis of gender-role stereotypes,
  - 3. using resources and following practices that discourage gender-role stereotypes,
  - 4. ensuring that resources and school communications use inclusive language and

- 5. offering counselling that encourages students to choose careers based on their interests and abilities rather than their gender. [1999, 2023]
- 24.2.7.3 School authorities should prohibit policy specifying dress codes for students and teachers that discriminate based on any protected grounds. [2015, 2023]
- 24.2.8.1 No one should be denied employment opportunities on the basis of their race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, physical characteristics, disability, marital status, family status, age, ancestry, place of origin, place of residence, socioeconomic background or linguistic background. [2004, 2023]
- Urban Municipalities Association should encourage their members, in consultation with employers, labour unions and social service organizations, to determine the minimum wage that workers in their communities would require to support their families and maintain a safe, healthy standard of living. [2008, 2023]
- 24.2.8.6 Employment equity policies are a positive way of ensuring that people have equitable access to educational and employment opportunities. [2004, 2023]
- 24.2.8.7 Employment equity programs should
  - 1. seek to improve conditions for people who are disadvantaged as a result of discrimination and
  - 2. offer educational opportunities to help underrepresented groups advance in their careers. [2004, 2023]
- 24.2.8.8 The Government of Alberta should amend legislation to improve the social and economic security of part-time, temporary and low-wage workers. [1998, 2023]
- 19.2.11.1 The Association promotes gender equity in positions within the profession where underrepresentation has been identified. [2019, 2021]
- 19.2.11.2 School authorities should promote gender equity in positions where underrepresentation has been identified.[1990, 2021]
- 19.2.11.3 School authorities should promote gender equity in school and system leadership positions by
  - 1. developing and communicating promotion policies ensuring that employees, regardless of gender, are selected using the same criteria;
  - 2. developing and implementing leadership programs that assist and encourage potential leaders to aspire to administrative positions at all levels; and
  - 3. developing and implementing programs that eliminate barriers. [1990, 2021]
- 19.2.11.4 School authorities should develop clear, explicit and comprehensive policies that address the health, safety and employment concerns of sexual- and gender-minority staff.[2006, 2021]
- 19.2.11.5 The Government of Alberta should permit teachers, on all official department and school records, to change, in accord with their lived gender identity, their name and gender and the pronouns associated with them. [2015, 2021]
- 19.2.11.6 School authorities should protect sexual and gender minority teachers from the unwanted disclosure of their sexual identity during all school activities and processes and on forms and records. [2018, 2021]
- 19.2.11.7 School authorities should develop policies and procedures that permit teachers to change, in accordance with their lived gender identity, their name, gender and pronouns on all official employment records to protect their privacy. [2018, 2021]
- 19.2.11.8 The Government of Alberta should ensure that changes in legislation respecting education do not diminish the protection provided to teachers and other school authority employees against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. [2019, 2021]
- 24.2.1.3 Members of all family types have the right to
  - 1. be free from harassment, discrimination and violence;

- 2. be treated fairly, equitably and with dignity;
  - 3. identify and express themselves freely;
  - 4.0 have their confidentiality respected; and
  - 5. be valued and affirmed as individuals.[2006, 2023]
- 24.2.5.2 When a teacher identifies a student's needs, whether educational, medical or social, the student should receive support from a staff member or a service provider as soon as possible. [1971, 2023]
- 24.2.5.7 The Government of Alberta should recognize as at risk and provide sufficient funding to address the needs of children in the following groups:
  - 1. Indigenous students,
  - 2. English-language learners,
  - 3. children living in poverty,
  - 4. children new to Canada,
  - 5. children from refugee backgrounds,
  - 6. children who have experienced trauma and/or have mental health issues, and
- 24.2.8.6 Employment equity policies are a positive way of ensuring that people have equitable access to educational and employment opportunities. [2004, 2023]
- 24.2.8.7 Employment equity programs should
  - 1. seek to improve conditions for people who are disadvantaged as a result of discrimination and
  - 2. offer educational opportunities to help underrepresented groups advance in their careers. [2004, 2023]
- 24.3.2.1 The Association encourages its locals to establish women in educational leadership committees. [2020, 2023]
- 4.2.1.2 The Association endorses and seeks to embody in its policies and programs the principles articulated in the United Nations Manifesto 2000 for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence, which urges individuals and societies to
  - 1. respect the life and dignity of each human being without discrimination or prejudice;
  - 2. practise peace and reject violence in all its forms—physical, sexual, psychological, economic and social—especially toward the deprived and vulnerable, such as children and adolescents;
  - 3. share time and material resources with others in a spirit of generosity and as a way of ending exclusion, injustice, and political and economic oppression;
  - 4. defend freedom of expression and cultural diversity by listening and talking to others and by avoiding fanaticism, defamation and the rejection of others;
  - 5. preserve the planet by promoting consumer behaviour and development practices that respect all forms of life and preserve the balance of nature on the planet; and
  - 6. rediscover and create new forms of solidarity by contributing to community development, encouraging women to participate fully and respecting democratic principles. [2003, 2023]
- 24.2.1.4 The Association opposes the distribution of material that promotes hate or bias against any identifiable individual or equity-seeking group. [1990, 2023]
- 3.2.1.11 The Government of Alberta should analyze the results of achievement tests and diploma examinations to determine whether such factors as the gender or cultural background of students influence results and, if they do, revise the tests to eliminate those biases. [1991, 2019]
- 12.2.3.5 School authorities should ensure that the facilities for which they are responsible contain all-gender washrooms and change rooms that are readily accessible to students and staff. [2015, 2023]

- 2.2.3.8 The Government of Alberta should change provincial building codes to require all newly constructed public facilities, including schools, to have gender-neutral washrooms. [2018, 2023]

**From *Diversity, Equity, and Human Rights Position Paper* (2003, revised 2013)**

**Principles, Definitions and Fundamental Elements**

A primary role of public education in a democratic society is to foster equity, human rights, social responsibility and justice. The Alberta Teachers' Association is committed to eliminating barriers that prevent people from participating fully in education and society and to fostering understanding, empathy and compassion. The Association is committed to the principles of respecting diversity, equity and human rights. The Association understands "respect for diversity" to mean adhering to beliefs and practices that demonstrate tolerance; accepting and respecting differences in people and their unique circumstances; recognizing differences as positive attributes around which to build educational experiences; and recognizing the complex and changing nature of individual identities. Rather than something to be managed, diversity is, in the Association's view, an asset that can help create an abundant and productive democracy. The Association understands "equity" to mean treating all people fairly and justly in light of their unique circumstances; ensuring that all people have an equal opportunity to reach their full potential; and ensuring that oppressed and marginalized individuals and groups are included in society and treated fairly. The Association understands "human rights" to mean the equal and inalienable right of all persons to live in a free, just and peaceful society without regard to race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical characteristics, disability, marital status, family status, age, ancestry, place of origin, place of residence, socioeconomic background or linguistic background. Supporting human rights also entails recognizing and protecting the inherent dignity of all people at the individual, organizational and public policy levels.

The Association's work in the area of diversity, equity and human rights has four broad goals: (1) to foster the development of a safe and caring, inclusive school culture that provides students with a broad range of educational experiences that reflect the diversity of the community; (2) to ensure that student learning is based on giving all students an equal opportunity to meet high standards, using a curriculum and assessment methods that reflect the diverse nature of knowledge and that draws on differences among people to enrich learning and engaging students as active citizens; (3) to ensure that professional development for teachers encourages them to engage in reflective practice and research, helps them to accommodate diversity in the classroom and helps them understand how social class and power relationships contribute to sexism, racism and other forms of marginalization; and (4) is to advocate for a form of educational governance and administration that provide adequate and equitable funding to schools, regards educational funding as an investment in the broader community, uses a broad range of accountability measures that reflect the complex nature of learning and supports research that sheds light on the complex relationships among poverty, racism and all forms of marginalization. These goals recognize the importance of adapting a multifaceted and research-based approach to promoting equity, human rights and respect for diversity.

**Inclusive Learning Communities**

The Association believes that schools should be inclusive learning communities. As inclusive learning communities, schools should demonstrate the following characteristics: a respect for diversity, equity and human rights; support for the intellectual, social, physical, emotional and spiritual development of each child; respect for the values of cooperation, trust, caring, sharing, respect and responsibility; a commitment to racial harmony and gender equity; support for Indigenous First Nations, Métis and Inuit education; support for initiatives that address the effect of poverty on children; a commitment to peace, global education and the prevention of violence, support for the development of systemic and sustainable school/family/community partnerships; and provide ongoing professional development and resources that support inclusive learning communities. Schools that have these characteristics are places of empathy and safety in which differences are valued.

The Association fosters the development of schools as inclusive learning communities by supporting teaching practices that promote respect for diversity, equity and human rights; by supporting initiatives that schools, locals, specialist councils and other subgroups take to transform schools into inclusive learning communities; and by building partnerships with organizations that share our commitment to fostering inclusion. Diversity, equity and human rights efforts can be sustained only through collaboration and principled partnerships. Cooperation among stakeholders and the willingness of government and nongovernmental agencies to share resources are critical. The Association's Code of Professional Conduct admonishes teachers to respect the dignity and rights of all persons. Prospective teachers should be thoroughly prepared to cope with the increasingly diverse makeup of today's classrooms. Therefore, faculties of education should include and support the principles of diversity, equity and human rights in teacher preparation programs and practices. The Association supports inclusive learning communities through the establishment of gay–straight alliance groups to create awareness and action that promote the creation of safe learning environments for all students in Alberta high schools.

### **Discrimination**

The Association opposes any injurious discrimination on the basis of race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical characteristics, disability, marital status, family status, age, ancestry, place of origin, place of residence, socioeconomic background or linguistic background. Furthermore, the Association opposes the distribution of material that promotes racial or ethnic intolerance. Local and provincial programs should be developed to help teachers counteract and eliminate stereotyping and injurious discrimination by promoting intercultural respect, understanding and appreciation. The Association respects single-parent, same-sex, biracial, bicultural, blended, extended, foster and traditional nuclear family units and believes that members of all such families have the right to be free from harassment, discrimination and violence; be treated fairly, equitably and with dignity; have their confidentiality respected; and be valued and affirmed as human beings. The Association also believe that everyone has the right to self-identification and freedom of expression.

### **Gender Equity**

Educators can promote gender equity by encouraging students to participate in educational programs regardless of their gender; by ensuring that responsibilities in school are not assigned on the basis of gender-role stereotypes; by adopting instructional materials and practices that discourage gender-role stereotyping; by using inclusive language in educational materials and in school communications; and by ensuring that career counselling does not promote gender-role stereotyping. The Association endorses the increased representation of women in educational administration in situations in which underrepresentation has been identified.



## **Conclusion**

The Association believes that the tensions that are an integral part of a democratic and inclusive society can—and must—be managed peacefully. Accordingly, the Association endorses the principle of worldwide nuclear disarmament. On a more local level, the Association works collaboratively through its policies and programs to build a culture of peace and nonviolence not only within the profession but also within the public education system and society generally. In doing so, it endorses the following guiding principles from the United Nations Manifesto 2000 for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence: (1)/respect for the life and dignity of each human being without discrimination or prejudice; (2)/rejection of violence in all forms, whether physical, sexual, psychological, economic or social, especially in relation to the most deprived and vulnerable elements of society, such as children and adolescents; (3)/sharing of time and material resources in an effort to end exclusion, injustice and political and economic oppression; (4)/defending the right of people to express themselves freely but in a way that involves discussion and listening and that avoids fanaticism, defamation and rejection of others; (5)/promoting responsible consumer behaviour and development practices that respect all forms of life and preserve the balance of nature on the planet; and (6)/contributing to the development of communities that respect democratic principles and in which women participate fully